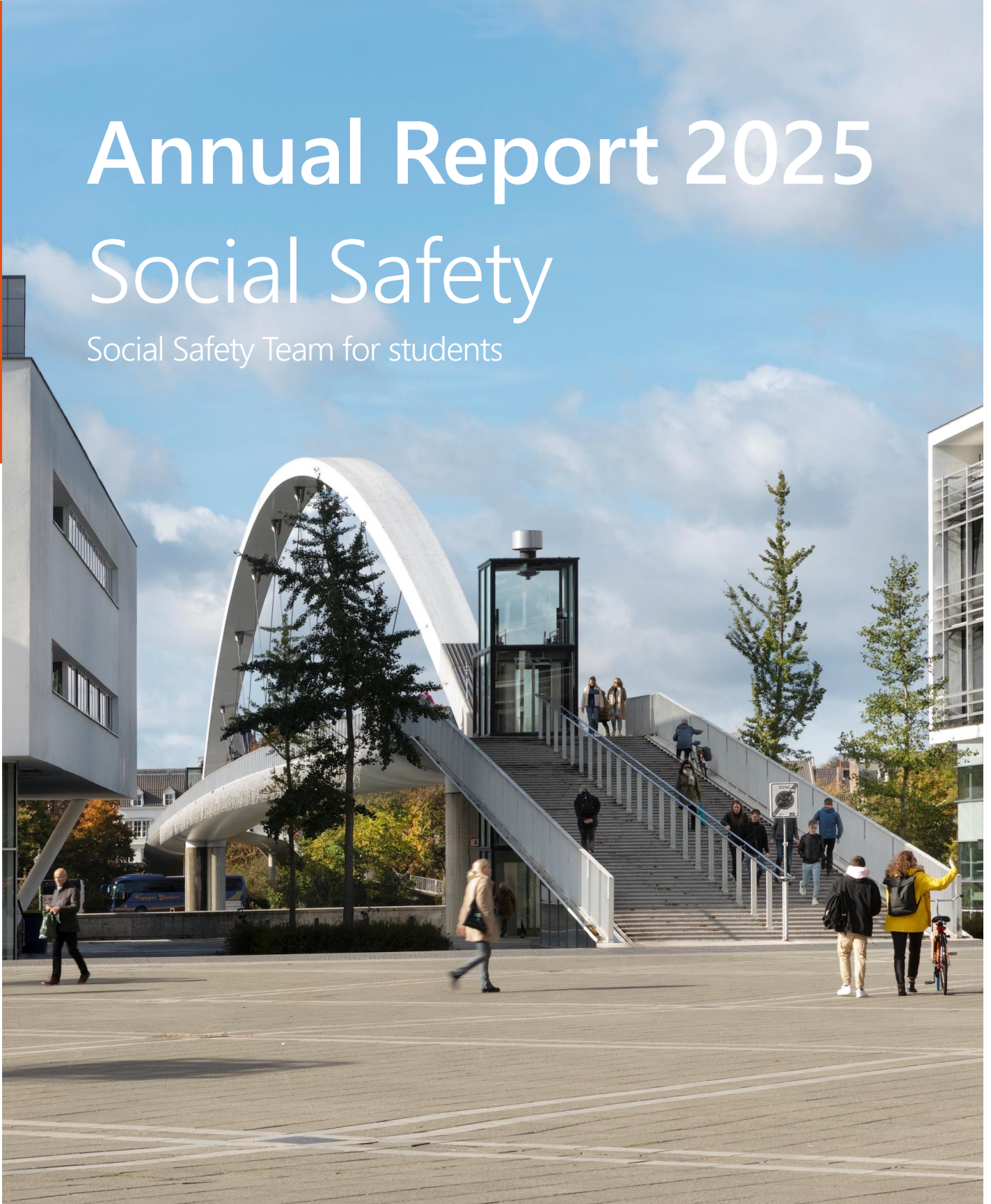


# Annual Report 2025

## Social Safety

Social Safety Team for students



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# 1

# Introduction

# 1 Introduction

This is the 2025 annual report of the Social Safety Team at Maastricht University (UM). The Social Safety Team is the central reporting point for students dealing with undesirable behaviour. This report provides insight into the number and nature of the reports registered in 2025, as well as the composition and working methods of the team and wider organisational developments. It also discusses the plans and objectives of the Social Safety Team, and the team's role in promoting and safeguarding a safe, supportive environment for all UM students.

That social safety within higher education requires systematic attention and sustained, targeted prevention is clear from research by Statistics Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> Findings published in April 2025 show that, in the 12 months preceding the study, approximately 52% of female students and 19% of male students had experienced some form of sexually inappropriate behaviour, ranging from unwanted comments online and offline to physical violence. Overall, 16% of students reported having experienced physical sexual harassment, 15% online inappropriate behaviour and 27% offline non-physical forms, such as unwanted sexual comments.

Other national initiatives also underline the importance of this theme. For example, also in April 2025, King Willem-Alexander – at the invitation of Mariëtte Hamer – held talks with students and university representatives on tackling sexually inappropriate behaviour. A key focus of these discussions was the implementation of the 2023 Student Pact.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CBS (2025). *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Grensoverschrijdend Gedrag*.  
[www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2025/17/seksueel-grensoverschrijdend-gedrag-ervaren-door-studenten-2024](https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2025/17/seksueel-grensoverschrijdend-gedrag-ervaren-door-studenten-2024)

<sup>2</sup> Studentenpact.nl

## Reading guide

Chapter 2 provides insight into the nature and number of registered reports, the background of the individuals who reported them, and way in which the reports were handled. Chapter 3 contains the analysis of the reports and the resulting recommendations for the university. Finally, Chapter 4 provides an overview of the developments, objectives, working methods and activities of the Social Safety Team.



# 2

## Reports, reporting parties, nature and follow-up

## 2 Reports, reporting parties, nature and follow-up

*Every initial contact by a student with a member of the Social Safety Team is logged as a 'report.' Wherever possible, reports are handled informally. If a formal route is needed or preferred, the student is referred to the Complaints Service Point (CSP). If several reports point to a wider pattern, the ombuds officer may be involved, and this can also lead to unsolicited advice to the organisation.*

### *2.1 Number of reports and reporting parties*

Students can phone, email or use the Reflex appointment planner to schedule a meeting with a confidential adviser, choosing from different contact options. In 2025, the confidential advisers registered a total of 104 reports, compared to 127 in 2024. Most reports (88) were made directly by the reporting party. The remaining reports reached the team through third parties: 6 via staff members, 1 via the CCP, 1 via a member of the public and 7 via boards or confidential contact persons. Of the 104 reports, 57 were reported during a personal meeting on location (at the SSC in the city centre or PHS in Randwyck), 27 via an online Teams meeting, 8 by email and 12 by phone.

In addition to the 104 reports received directly by the Social Safety Team, a further 70 reports were identified through a survey of study advisers and UM-psychologists: 42 had been made to study advisers and 28 to UM-psychologists. This suggests that when students have formed trusted relationships with study advisers and UM-psychologists, they also turn to them to report undesirable behaviour. For privacy reasons, it is not possible to determine whether the Social Safety Team was involved in following up on these reports, and if so how many. For this reason, they are not included in the official records. They do, however, give an indication of the wider number of reports relating to social safety in 2025.

In 2026, the plan is to explore how these figures can be interpreted more effectively, for example by adding extra registration codes in Corsa, so as to create a more complete picture of social safety reports in the long term.

This annual report records the number of reports on the basis of unique cases received directly by the Social Safety Team's confidential advisers and handled and registered by them in 2025. It is difficult to make a straightforward comparison with reporting figures from previous years, as reports in those years were also registered by the coordinator, without the involvement or intervention of a confidential adviser. The 2025 figures should therefore not be taken to mean that the number of reports was lower than in 2024.

Moreover, the reports themselves do not provide a complete picture of perceived social safety. For careful interpretation, it is important to consider these figures in conjunction with other signals and experiences, follow the reporting trend over multiple years and continue to monitor national studies.

## *2.2 Profile of reporting parties and share of reports per faculty*

The background characteristics of the reporting parties, including gender and enrolment status, were also analysed. In 2025, 66% of reports were made by women (2024: 59%) and 30% by men (2024: 32%). One report was made by a student who identified as non-binary. Some reporting parties chose not to disclose their gender.

In terms of faculty distribution, the largest share of reports came from the Faculty of Law (24%), followed by the School of Business and Economics (20%), Faculty of Science and Engineering (16%), Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (14%), Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (8%) and Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience (4%). A number of reports were not linked to a specific faculty (14%). This breakdown shows which groups within the university are reporting issues and can help identify needs for targeted prevention, information and support. Figure 1 shows the percentages of reports per faculty.

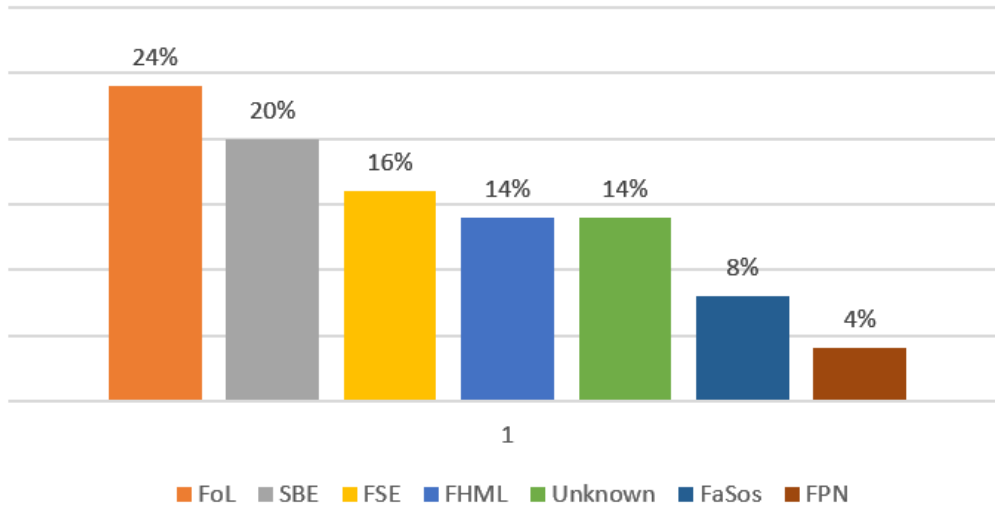


Figure 1. Share of reports per faculty (2025)

### 2.3 Nature of reports

Students can contact the Social Safety Team to report undesirable behaviour, for example if their integrity is compromised, personal boundaries are crossed or their sense of safety is undermined. This might involve discrimination, harassment, bullying, aggression or (sexual) violence.

Slightly less than half of the reports related to undesirable behaviour between students (40). A significant proportion concerned undesirable behaviour between students and staff (35). The other reports related to undesirable behaviour between students and members of the public (12) or to situations in which the relationship between the reporting party and the defendant was not known.

The various categories into which the reports are classed are defined in the appendix. The percentages per type of report registered by the Social Safety Team in 2025 are indicated below and shown in Figure 2.

Sexual violence	25 reports, i.e. 24% of the total (2024: 20%) *
Inappropriate conduct	17 reports; 16% (2024: 8%)
Unprofessional conduct	16 reports; 15% (2024: 12%)
Other	12 reports; 12% (2024: 18%) **
Concerning behaviour	9 reports; 9% (2024: 3%)
Unequal treatment	6 reports; 6% (2024: 8%)
Harassment	5 reports; 5% (2024: 10%)
Discrimination	5 reports; 5% (2024: 5%)
Bullying	3 reports; 3% (2024: 3%)
Stalking	3 reports; 3% (2024: 4%)
Aggression	3 reports; 3% (2024: 9%)

\* Sixteen of the reports of sexual violence involved physical sexual violence, nine involved verbal/online sexual violence.

\*\* These reporting parties were referred to the appropriate contact person; in five cases this was a study adviser. See also Section 2.4, 'Follow-up.'

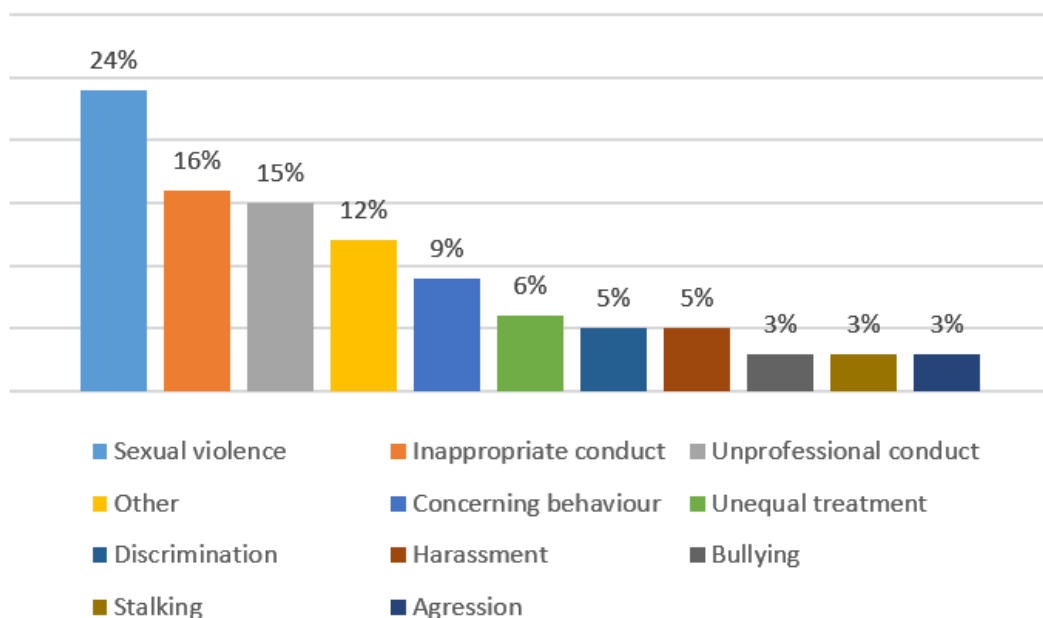


Figure 2. Nature of the reports (2025). Percentages are rounded to whole numbers; as a result, the total may deviate slightly (approx. 1%).

## 2.4 Follow-up

Reporting parties approach the Social Safety Team with different expectations and needs. Some simply want to share their story, seek advice or talk things through with someone. Others only want their report logged, for example in case the behaviour happens again or similar situations arise with others. Some want concrete action to be taken, in which case they are mainly looking to explore the possible routes and procedures, and to receive guidance and support along the way.

Reporting parties who do not (yet) want to take direct action have a range of reasons. Often they still require professional follow-up, for example in the form of a referral or further discussions. Because circumstances vary widely, follow-up differs from case to case and cannot be captured in a fixed protocol.

Where needed, students are referred onwards. Within the university, this mainly involves referrals to UM-psychologists, study advisers or ombuds officers. External organisations that may be involved or contacted include the police, the Sexual Assault Centre or Discriminatie.nl.

For information on the follow-up of reports referred to the CCP and the ombuds officer in 2025, please refer to the 2025 Annual Report on Social Safety for Staff and to the ombuds officer's annual report, which under the UM Ombuds Officer's Charter is submitted each year to the Executive Board. For clarity, the handling of reports has been divided into seven categories, explained below. Figure 3 shows the percentages for each category.

### *Registration*

In 10% of cases (2024: 16%), reporting parties only wanted to share their story and requested no further action. In some of these cases, their motivation was to help action be taken more effectively if the behaviour were repeated or multiple reports were made about the same person. Reasons for not pursuing follow-up varied. Some reporting parties feared being identifiable or worried about reprisals or possible consequences for their own reputation, studies or social circle. In a number of cases, they were concerned about the potential consequences for the defendant.

### *Advice*

In 36% (2024: 24%) of reports, the reporting party requested advice only. Some wanted to handle the matter themselves without the confidential adviser becoming involved. Others did not wish to escalate immediately, but first wanted greater clarity on the possible routes, procedures and processes. These conversations focus on the pros and cons of taking – or not taking – next steps, so the reporting party can make an informed decision about how to proceed.

### *Informal intervention*

In 16% (2024: 20%) of reports, an informal intervention was used. This usually involves organising a discussion between the reporting party and the defendant, sometimes supported by a facilitator, manager, colleague (e.g. from People & Development) or (vice) dean. It can also involve a decision table. In most cases, reporting parties appreciated the confidential adviser being present to offer support and act as an observer.

### *Referral*

In 12% of cases the report resulted only in a referral, without further follow-up or involvement from a confidential adviser.

### *Guidance*

In 11% (2024: 15%) of reports, either the reporting party or the defendant needed ongoing guidance and follow-up. Some reporting parties wanted to work towards a solution directly with the defendant, while others needed several discussions before deciding which steps to take, with or without the involvement of the confidential adviser. Occasionally they also consult others, such as friends or family, which can lengthen the process. In some cases, reporting parties do not actively pursue a solution but keep the confidential adviser updated as the situation develops.

### *Formal complaint*

No formal complaints were filed in 2025 (2024: 1%).

### Other

In 16% of reports, the follow-up action was not indicated or no action by the Social Safety Team was required. These reports were not related to social safety, for example cases for the Examination Board. This category also includes a scheduled appointment that did not take place (no-show).

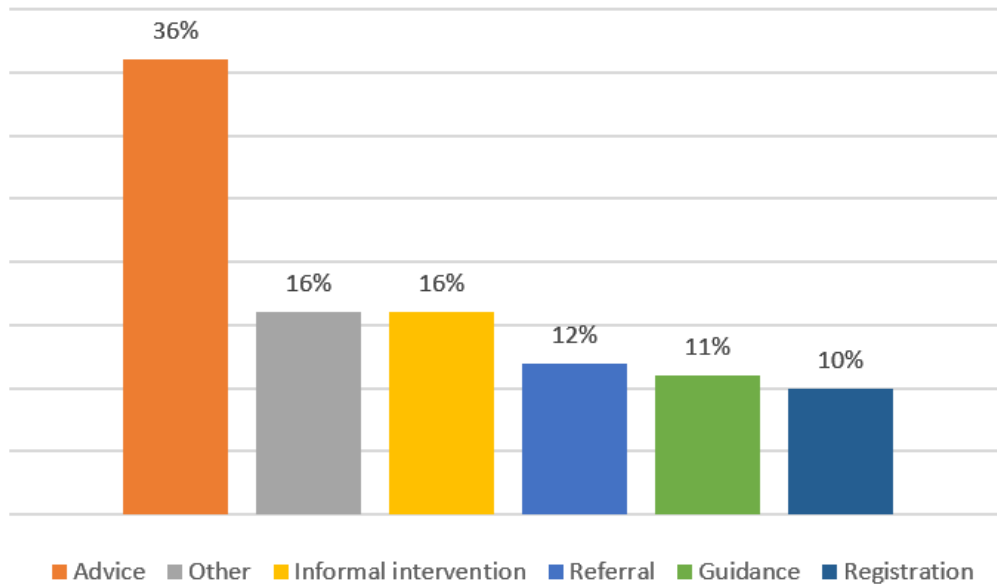


Figure 3. Types of follow-up (2025). Percentages are rounded to whole numbers; as a result, the total may deviate slightly (approx. 1%).

# 3

## Analysis and recommendations

## 3 Analysis and recommendations

*This chapter analyses the reports received by the Social Safety Team in 2025. It also sets out recommendations to further strengthen social safety and, in doing so, student wellbeing.*

### 3.1 Findings

The Social Safety Team registered 104 reports in 2025 (2024: 127). A further 70 reports were identified through study advisers and UM-psychologists: 42 had been made to study advisers and 28 to UM-psychologists. For privacy reasons, it is not possible to determine whether the Social Safety Team was involved in following up on these reports, and if so how many. For this reason, they are not included in the official records. They do, however, give an indication of the wider number of reports relating to social safety. In 2026, the plan is to explore how these figures can be interpreted more effectively, for example via Corsa.

The number of reports reflects students' willingness to come forward. While the Social Safety Team's contact point is actively used, reports are also made to other internal parties. For the team, it is important to understand whether students are making a conscious choice to report elsewhere – and, if so, why – or whether there is scope to route reports more effectively, of course within the boundaries of confidentiality. This is currently being explored in consultation with the relevant parties.

In 2025, the first steps were taken to further strengthen the professionalism and visibility of the team. These included recruiting a support officer and exploring the development of communication tools such as a logo and information materials.

## *3.2 Points of attention for the Social Safety Team*

### *Registration of and insight into reports*

From 2025 onwards, the figures will include only reports received directly by the Social Safety Team, in order to avoid double registration and maintain a clear overview. In 2026, the team plans to examine why a substantial number of reports are also submitted through other channels and whether this reflects a conscious choice on the part of students. It will also look at whether the team's visibility or the referral process may be contributing factors.

In addition, the team will explore how reports made to study advisers and UM-psychologists can be registered more transparently, for example by expanding the Corsa codes via SUMa. This should allow numbers to be recorded more accurately while maintaining confidentiality, thus contributing to better insight as well as more targeted prevention and support.

### *Team development, accessibility and diversity*

Strengthening the visibility, recognisability and accessibility of the central reporting point, and improving cooperation with other support structures, remain key priorities. Not all of the planned steps were fully implemented in 2025, but a support officer was appointed, the intended effect of which is expected to become visible in the course of 2026.

Diversity within the team also remains a priority. An external confidential adviser is due to be appointed in 2026, which should bring greater variety to the backgrounds and perspectives within the team and thus increase both choice and accessibility for students.

Through continued attention to these focus areas, the Social Safety Team aims to further strengthen the accessibility and effectiveness of the social safety support structure and to build long-term trust in the support it provides.

### *3.3 Recommendations for the Executive Board*

Based on its activities and experiences in 2025, the Social Safety Team makes the following recommendations to further strengthen the effectiveness and accessibility of the social safety structure. Not all the targets set in 2024 were fully implemented, so these activities will be continued in 2026. A number of key recommendations are discussed in more detail below, followed by further recommendations set out in bullet points.

#### *Information and communication*

The team recommends strengthening confidence in and awareness of the Social Safety Team through systematic information, workshops and targeted communication, with the aim of increasing students' willingness to report undesirable behaviour.

#### *Recognisability and accessibility*

In 2026, work will continue the development of communication tools such as a logo, brochure and other promotional materials. To make the most of these resources, appropriate support and resources should be made available so they can be actively and widely promoted within the university community, especially among students.

#### *Coordination with other programmes*

Attention should be paid to coordination and coherence with relevant UM programmes, departments and themes, such as the Sexual Safety Programme, DEI+ and the Concerning Behaviour initiative. The various initiatives should refer to each other wherever possible to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing. This will make support within UM's social safety structures more focused and effective.

### *Other recommendations*

- Finalising the revision of the new Code of Conduct on Integrity, to replace the current Code of Conduct and Rules of Conduct for students.
- Finalising and implementing the Regulations on Reporting and Handling Inappropriate Behaviour (including sexual harassment, aggression, violence, bullying and discrimination) for staff and students.
- Drafting and implementing a Protocol for Concerning Behaviour, to ensure that cases involving heightened risks are handled consistently and carefully.
- Continuing the further development and professionalisation of the team and the individual members through targeted training, peer consultation and the ongoing promotion of expertise.
- Supporting dialogue and promoting expertise on social safety within the university community, with the confidential advisers acting as sparring partners.
- Investigating whether trained moderators can systematically be made available through the setup of a fixed structure. This remains an important ambition for the Social Safety Team, to ensure that reports can be handled professionally while keeping the role of the confidential advisers clearly delineated.

## *3.4 UM regulations*

### *Policy and regulations*

In 2024, UM began revising two key regulations: the Complaints Procedure and the Code of Conduct on Integrity. Both processes have been delayed by internal circumstances. The Social Safety Team has provided input to the working group responsible for revising the Code of Conduct. This revision will be further coordinated in 2026. In addition, a Protocol for Concerning Behaviour was due to be developed in 2024 but has not yet been completed.

In 2023, the Ombuds Officer's Regulations and Charter were extended to include students, and the new decision-making process was finalised. The ombuds officer has therefore also been available to students since 1 January 2024.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In 2025, the Social Safety Team took important steps towards further professionalisation. The introduction of the support officer, improved registration and analysis of reports, and the preparations for communication materials have all helped to lay a solid foundation for the development, visibility and accessibility of support.

The number of reports registered in 2025 shows that students are willing to come forward about undesirable behaviour. At the same time, a considerable number of reports are filed through other support structures. In 2026, the focus will be on improving insight into these reports and strengthening cooperation with study advisers, UM-psychologists and relevant programmes, so that reporting behaviour can be better understood and referral and registration processes can be further optimised.

In 2025, the reports mainly concerned sexual violence, unprofessional conduct and inappropriate conduct. This underlines the continued importance of expert guidance and support in the area of social safety. Concrete measures include the systematic organisation of peer consultation, for example with confidential advisers from other Dutch universities, and the further strengthening of expertise through training in accordance with the guidelines of the National Association of Confidential Advisers (LVV).

Accessibility, visibility and team diversity remain key priorities for the Social Safety Team. The development of communication materials, strengthening of internal work processes, greater diversity among confidential advisers and closer cooperation with other teams and programmes will all help increase trust in, and the effectiveness of, the support available.

In 2026, the Social Safety Team will focus on consolidating these improvements, further professionalising and training team members and continuing initiatives that contribute to a safe, accessible and recognisable support structure for UM students and staff. This will provide an important basis for maintaining and further strengthening the quality of our services.

# 4

## Social Safety Team

## 4 Social Safety Team for students

*Within the university, the support structures for social safety of staff (CCP) and students (Social Safety Team) are organised separately. Where relevant and possible, these different structures work together and coordinate with one another. This report focuses on the reports received by the Social Safety Team from or in relation to students.*

In 2025, the Social Safety Team was composed as follows:

- confidential advisers (4)                      since 2023
- ombuds officer                                    since 2024
- support officer                                    in office as of 1 November 2025
- coordinator                                        discontinued from 1 May 2025.

### 4.1 Team developments, roles and organisational changes

Within UM, the Social Safety Team acts as a central reporting point for students who have experienced undesirable behaviour. Reports are registered and followed up carefully and confidentially. Reporting parties are informed about possible next steps and procedures and, if they wish, supported through any follow-up process. In addition, the team plays a central role in raising awareness of social safety and in further safeguarding a safe and respectful learning environment for students.

In April 2025, the confidential advisers submitted a proposal to restructure the Social Safety Team, which was approved by the Executive Board. As a result, the team composition changed during the course of 2025: the position of coordinator was discontinued, and the role of support officer was introduced. A total of 0.8 FTE was redistributed, with 0.2 allocated to the confidential advisers and 0.6 to the support officer. These changes are intended to create a clearer division of roles and responsibilities within the team, improve the efficiency of work processes, strengthen cooperation with internal and external partners and clarify and expand the team's services, visibility and accessibility for students and staff.

The duties and responsibilities of the confidential advisers were expanded and refined in 2025 in the areas of reporting, advice and policy development, information provision, internal and external advocacy, and monitoring of the team's development and professionalisation.

Confidential advisers now act as a central point of contact for reporting parties, allowing students to share their story directly and access appropriate support. These changes contribute to better accessibility for reporting parties, more efficient registration and follow-up of reports, higher-quality services and a stronger advisory role for the team. Thanks to their direct insight into what students are experiencing, and their contact with staff, the team can identify needs, trends and key areas for attention.

The support officer, who was appointed in November, plays a central role within the Social Safety Team. She is responsible for communication and information provision, increases the team's visibility and facilitates internal and external collaboration. She also coordinates events, campaigns and training, maintains systematic contact with faculties and external partners, and supports diary management and the organisation of consultations. In this way, the role contributes to efficient work processes, strengthens the team's network and helps ensure a professional and visible position for the team within the university. The support officer also provides support to the confidential advisers, enabling them to focus as fully as possible on their core tasks and on directly assisting students.

In 2025, responsibilities within the team were divided across three roles: confidential adviser, ombuds officer and support officer. From the end of November onwards, the work was distributed across the team, further strengthening the continuity, quality and professionalism of the service provision.

### *The confidential adviser*

The confidential adviser offers students – whether reporting parties or defendants – independent and confidential support, advice and guidance when making a report and during any follow-up process, always with the consent of those involved. Where necessary, the confidential adviser refers students to other services or professional care providers and can support reporting parties during discussions or proceedings involving other parties. In addition,

through their many points of contact with students and staff, confidential advisers contribute to awareness and dialogue around social safety by providing information, training and advice.

At the administrative level, confidential advisers provide input for preventive guidelines and make both solicited and unsolicited recommendations to the Executive Board on patterns, trends and developments relating to social safety. They are also responsible for reporting on cases and wider developments, for example in the annual report, thereby contributing to transparency, policy evaluation and the continuous improvement of the Social Safety Team. Finally, confidential advisers act as sparring partners for colleagues in individual cases of inappropriate or concerning behaviour and provide advice on policy development.

### *The ombuds officer*

The ombuds officer is an independent and impartial discussion partner for UM staff and students. Since January 2024, students have been able to approach the ombuds officer directly. The ombuds officer provides a listening ear, advises on regulations, procedures and rights, and refers individuals to appropriate support. Additionally, the ombuds officer facilitates discussions, identifies trends and may independently investigate systemic issues either on their own initiative or in response to reports. Findings and recommendations are reported directly to the Executive Board.

### *The support officer*

The support officer assists in the management of communication and information provision, helps to increase the visibility of the team and facilitates internal and external collaboration. She coordinates events, awareness campaigns and training courses, maintains systematic contact with faculties, study associations and external partners, and supports diary management and the organisation of consultations. Through these activities, the support officer contributes to efficient work processes, strengthens the team's network and helps ensure a professional and visible position for the team within the university.



#### *4.2 Mission, principles and objectives*

A socially safe environment is essential for learning, personal development and cooperation between students. The Social Safety Team works systematically to lower barriers to reporting, strengthen support structures and promote a culture of respect, openness and inclusivity. Social safety is seen as a shared responsibility: both staff and students play an important role in recognising, discussing and preventing unsafe situations, and in this way contribute to an environment in which everyone feels seen, respected and heard. It is this joint effort that helps to create a lasting positive impact on the university community.

During the year under review, the Social Safety Team focused on providing accessible support for students who wished to report undesirable behaviour, while ensuring confidentiality at all times. This included receiving and supporting students, acting as a central reporting point and handling reports with due care. For much of 2025, this work was carried out within a team

structure without additional support capacity, which required extra effort in terms of coordination and organisation.

In 2026, the focus will be on further implementing and consolidating the improvement plans already set in motion within the team. The appointment of a support officer has created a better division of tasks, allowing the confidential advisers to focus more on their core responsibilities, while the support officer takes on specific supporting tasks. This contributes to a more efficient and structured way of working and supports the further professionalisation of the service. At the same time, we expect this development to strengthen the team's visibility and the impact of its work within the university community in the long term. Points requiring particular attention in the coming year include diversification of the confidential advisers and the issue of combined roles as confidential advisers for students.

The concrete objectives are as follows:

- **Accessibility and visibility of the central reporting point:** Further strengthening the accessibility and visibility of the reporting point for students, including through targeted communication, information and representation during introduction and educational activities.
- **Promotional material:** Developing promotional materials to strengthen the recognisability of the Social Safety Team, such as a logo and brochure, in collaboration with the Department of Marketing and Communications and an external design agency.
- **Internal work processes:** Consolidating and further professionalising internal work processes, including registration, reporting and policy feedback on trends and signals.
- **Diversity:** Adding an external confidential adviser to the team in order to increase choice and accessibility for students.
- **Combined roles:** Exploring possible organisational models for the confidential adviser role, including the advantages and disadvantages of combined positions or the possible redistribution of staff or duties, with the aim of organising the role – and thus student support – as effectively as possible.

- **Prevention and awareness of social safety:** Systematically promoting prevention and awareness of social safety by organising and facilitating training, workshops and campaigns for students and staff.
- **Collaboration with internal and external parties:** Promoting cooperation with faculties, study associations and other relevant internal and external parties, with a view to clear coordination, short lines of communication, timely identification of issues and accurate registration.
- **Dialogue and expertise promotion:** Supporting dialogue and promoting expertise on social safety within the university community, with the confidential advisers acting as substantive sparring partners and advisers.
- **Continuous improvement of services and policy:** Further developing a systematic approach to the continuous improvement of services and policy in the area of social safety.
- **Peer consultation with other universities:** Coordinating the newly established peer consultation group and liaising with confidential advisers dealing with student reports at other Dutch universities, as well as participating in peer consultation sessions.
- **Continuing professional development of team members:** Organising ongoing training to strengthen the expertise and professional development of confidential advisers and to maintain the required certifications.

### 4.3 *Working methods*

The confidential advisers perform their role in complete independence. The position is not hierarchically embedded and is not subject to direct line management, but reports directly to the Executive Board. They also act independently when handling individual cases, sharing information about reporting parties only with their explicit consent. They identify, both on request and on their own initiative, recurring patterns, trends, developments and other relevant issues relating to social safety, and make recommendations on these to the Executive Board.

## 4.4 *Activities*

To promote knowledge exchange, strengthen collaboration and continuously improve the quality of our services, regular contact is maintained both with internal colleagues and with external organisations. Links are also maintained with a number of networks, consultation bodies and peer consultation groups, including confidential advisers from other Dutch universities. In addition, team members take part in a wide range of activities, as set out below.

### *Administrative coordination*

In 2025, regular consultations were held with the University Secretary, partly in the context of the restructuring of the Social Safety Team. From October onwards, this consultation structure was converted into quarterly meetings, with the aim of further developing the service together and improving its quality.

### *Internal consultations*

To strengthen cohesion and coordination within the social safety domain, the first steps were taken in 2025 towards establishing systematic consultations with stakeholders across UM. Meetings were held with the CCP, the Sexual Safety Programme, the coordinators of the FHML master's programmes, SUMa, the UM crisis manager, the student chaplaincy Innbetween, First Maastricht, the policy officer for student associations, the Commissie Kennismakingstijden Maastricht (KMTM committee) and others. From 2026 onwards, multidisciplinary consultations will be organised on a regular basis at the initiative of the UM crisis manager, with a view to strengthening mutual coordination, communication and, where possible, cooperation.

### *External organisations*

The confidential advisers were introduced to Victim Support Netherlands, Discriminatie.nl and Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling, a mediation agency. Information was obtained about their services and the possibilities for support and advice for both the Social Safety Team and reporting parties.

### *Presentations and workshops*

In 2025, the focus was on strengthening expertise and supporting students and student associations through workshops and peer consultation. In this context, three regular workshops were planned (Addressing Challenging Behaviour), one of which was cancelled due to a lack of participants. In addition, two workshops were delivered for students from sports clubs affiliated with MUSST.

### *Further training*

As part of their professionalisation and in order to meet the LVV certification requirements, the confidential advisers took part in training courses on dealing with emotions and resistance, delivered by Merlijn Opleidingen, and on workplace disputes, delivered by Van Oss & Partners. These courses help confidential advisers support students more effectively and respond appropriately to complex or emotionally charged situations. In the first quarter of 2026, the planned training includes courses on communicating with victims, delivered by Victim Support Netherlands, and on assisting accused parties, delivered by the National Institute of Confidential Advisers (LIVP).

### *Quality assurance and peer consultation*

To safeguard professionalisation, service quality, reflection and independence, the confidential advisers take part in quarterly peer consultations, both individually and collectively, within and outside UM. These sessions are held in line with the guidelines and requirements of the LVV.

At the end of 2025, the Social Safety Team took the initiative to establish a national peer consultation group involving confidential advisers for students from various Dutch universities. From 2026 onwards, online peer consultation meetings will be organised every four months

The confidential contact persons (VCPs) of the larger student associations (KoKo, Circumflex, Saurus and Tragos) take part in peer consultation under the guidance of a confidential adviser from the Social Safety Team. This is intended to support knowledge exchange, reflection and the strengthening of their signalling and support role within their respective associations.

### *Network of University Confidential Advisers (NUVP)*

To promote knowledge exchange and collegial support, the confidential advisers are affiliated with the Dutch Network of University Confidential Advisers (NUVP). The NUVP also organises a monthly online meeting where current issues and cases can be discussed informally and anonymously. In addition, a physical meeting is held twice a year in Utrecht, attended by one or more confidential advisers.

### *Events and campaigns*

In collaboration with INKOM, the Social Safety Team plays an advisory role in supporting students who have experienced sexually inappropriate behaviour. The team is also visible at events such as the Food for Thought stand, Board Day and the More to Explore market, with a view to informing students about the support and help available.

### *Recruitment*

In 2025, the confidential advisers drafted and circulated a job profile for the new position of support officer, which led to the successful recruitment of a support officer.

### *Communication*

To improve visibility and accessibility, the website texts were updated. Initial steps were also taken to strengthen the recognisability of the team, including by exploring options for developing communication tools such as a logo and information materials. These initiatives will be developed further in 2026.

# Appendix 1 Definitions of undesirable behaviour

## *Stalking*

Stalking is the deliberate and systematic harassment of a person, to the point where that person no longer feels safe. In Dutch law it is referred to as *belaging*.<sup>3</sup>

## *Unprofessional conduct*

Unprofessional conduct involves behaviour by a professional that falls short of the explicit or generally accepted standards of the profession.<sup>4</sup>

## *Aggression*

Aggression and violence can take different forms:

1. Verbal aggression, such as swearing, shouting or arguing in an excessively hostile way. This also includes discriminatory remarks. Verbal aggression can take place both in person and over the phone.
2. Physical aggression, such as kicking, pushing, hitting, spitting, damaging property or theft, as well as more serious or extreme forms of physical violence.
3. Psychological aggression, such as threatening, blackmailing or humiliating someone verbally or in writing. This is classified as internal aggression.<sup>5</sup>

## *Discrimination – unequal treatment*

Discrimination is the unequal treatment, disadvantaging or exclusion of people on the basis of personal characteristics, with no objective justification. These characteristics are referred to as grounds of discrimination.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Article 285B of the Criminal Code

<sup>4</sup> [www.encyclo.nl/begrip/onprofessioneel](http://www.encyclo.nl/begrip/onprofessioneel)

<sup>5</sup> [www.arboportaal.nl/onderwerpen/psychosociale-arbeidsbelasting/agressie-en-geweld/vormen-van-agressie-en-geweld](http://www.arboportaal.nl/onderwerpen/psychosociale-arbeidsbelasting/agressie-en-geweld/vormen-van-agressie-en-geweld)

<sup>6</sup> [www.mensenrechten.nl/mensenrechten-voor-jou/discriminatie-en-gelijke-behandeling](http://www.mensenrechten.nl/mensenrechten-voor-jou/discriminatie-en-gelijke-behandeling)

### *(Sexual) harassment*

Harassment is behaviour that may cause someone to feel threatened. A person can be harassed both physically and psychologically. Harassment includes unwanted touching, swearing, threatening emails or physically intimidating behaviour, such as coming too close in a threatening way. Sexual harassment is any form of behaviour with a sexual connotation that is experienced by the person concerned as unwanted, threatening and/or humiliating.<sup>7</sup>

### *Sexual violence*

Sexual violence is an umbrella term for sexual acts that someone is made to perform or undergo in an unequal situation, for example where the other person has more power, is physically stronger or older or where the victim is in a position of dependence. Sexual violence may include rape, other forms of sexual abuse or online abuse.<sup>8</sup>

### *Inappropriate conduct*

Behaviour that does not fall under one of the other categories but is not in keeping with accepted norms in society or within UM, is classified as inappropriate conduct. The nature of a report is not always clear-cut; often, several factors are involved.

### *Bullying*

Bullying is the ongoing and deliberate abuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour intended to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It may involve an individual or a group abusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more people who feel unable to prevent it. Bullying can take place in person or online, across a range of digital platforms and devices, and may be overt or covert. It is repeated over time or has the potential to be repeated, for example through the sharing of digital material. Bullying in any form, and for any reason, can have immediate, medium-term and long-term consequences for those involved, including bystanders.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [www.fnv.nl/werk-inkomen/veilig-gezond-werken/grensoverschrijdend-gedrag](http://www.fnv.nl/werk-inkomen/veilig-gezond-werken/grensoverschrijdend-gedrag)

<sup>8</sup> <https://centrumseksueelgeweld.nl/seksueel-geweld/>

<sup>9</sup> [www.stoppestennu.nl/definitie-pesten](http://www.stoppestennu.nl/definitie-pesten)

### *Concerning behaviour*

This refers to people who feel they have lost, or are losing, control over their lives, creating a risk that they may cause harm to themselves or others. It may involve people with a wide range of conditions or disabilities, and/or life problems such as debt, homelessness, unemployment, bereavement, social isolation, lack of insurance or irregular residency status.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [www.trimbos.nl/kennis/verward-gedrag/#wat](http://www.trimbos.nl/kennis/verward-gedrag/#wat)

