

Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan

It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment

All Ontarians deserve to feel safe from sexual violence and harassment in their communities, workplaces, homes, and schools.

During International Women's Week in 2015, the Ontario government launched a \$41 million, multi-ministry, three-year strategy to stop sexual violence and harassment in the province. It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment was a ground breaking initiative outlining concrete steps to help change attitudes, provide more supports for survivors, and make workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints about sexual violence and harassment.

The Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2016

A signature component of the Action Plan was a commitment to "introduce legislation to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing, and through the civil claim process."

To meet that commitment, the government introduced legislation in October 2015 to:

- Rescind the limitation period for any civil sexual assault claim under the Limitations Act, 2002;
- Repeal the two-year limitation period for claims of crimes relating to sexual violence brought to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board under the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act;
- Amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act by including a definition of workplace sexual harassment, and by requiring employers to investigate and address complaints of workplace harassment (including sexual harassment) and to take all reasonable steps to protect workers from workplace harassment (including sexual harassment);
- Shorten the notice provision in the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 to end a tenancy for survivors of domestic and sexual violence; and
- Require every publicly assisted college and university under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and every private career college under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 to have a standalone sexual violence policy and to report to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development or to the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges on the incidence of sexual violence in the postsecondary education sector.

The Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2016 received Royal Assent on March 8, 2016.

The Private Career Colleges Act, 2005

Attending one of Ontario's public colleges, universities, or private career colleges should be a time of personal fulfillment, growth, and opportunity. The government is committed to working closely with all postsecondary institutions to help students learn, study, and experience campus life at its finest, free from sexual violence and harassment.

Toward that end in the private career college sector, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2016 amended the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 to:

- Include a definition of sexual violence (which includes sexual harassment);
- Require, as a condition of registration, every private career college to have a sexual violence policy that:
 - specifically and solely addresses sexual violence involving students, and
 - sets out a process for responding to and addressing incidents and complaints of sexual violence involving students;
- Require every private career college to include its sexual violence policy in every enrolment contract with a student;
- Require that every private career college considers student input in the development of its sexual violence policy and every time the policy is reviewed or amended;
- Require every private career college to review its sexual violence policy at least once every three years and to amend it as appropriate;
- Require every private career college to implement its sexual violence policy in accordance with the regulations under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005;
- Require every private career college to provide information to the Superintendent concerning:
 - the number of times supports, services, and accommodation relating to sexual violence are requested and obtained by students,
 - any initiatives and programs to promote awareness of supports and services available to students,
 - the number of incidents and complaints of sexual violence reported by students, and
 - the implementation and effectiveness of its sexual violence policy;
- Require every private career college to ensure that the information it provides to the Superintendent does not include personal information within the meaning of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and
- Require every private career college to conduct a survey of its students relating to sexual violence as directed by the Superintendent and to disclose the results of the survey to the Superintendent.

Regulations

In support of the foregoing requirements, the Lieutenant Governor in Council amended Ontario Regulation 415/06 (pursuant to the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005) to:

- Require every application for registration of a private career college to include a copy of the applicant's sexual violence policy;
- Require every enrolment contract to include an acknowledgement by the student that he or she has received a copy of the private career college's sexual violence policy;
- Require every private career college to appropriately accommodate the needs of students affected by sexual violence at no cost to the students;
- Require every sexual violence policy to:
 - Provide information about the supports and services available at the private career college or through its agents for students affected by sexual violence,
 - Provide information about the supports and services available in the community for students affected by sexual violence,
 - Inform students that the private career college will appropriately accommodate the needs of students affected by sexual violence,

- Inform students that a formal report of an incident of sexual violence is not necessary to access supports, services, or accommodations, and
- Include details of the private career college's process for responding to and addressing incidents and complaints of sexual violence;
 - Require every private career college to publish its sexual violence policy on its website or to post it in a conspicuous location at each of its campuses; and
 - Require every private career college to provide or make available training on its sexual violence policy to owners, managers, staff, and students.

Effective Date

The new requirements under the amended Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and Ontario Regulation 415/06 come into force on January 1, 2017. Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development

Need More Information?

If you have questions about the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 contact the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development at:

Private Career Colleges Branch Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development 77 Wellesley Street, Box 977 Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Telephone: 416-314-0500 or 1-866-330-3395

Fax: 416-314-0499

Website: Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development

The full text of the Act and regulations can also be downloaded from the Ontario government E-Laws website.

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