

THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES

2023 Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey FAQs

Below are Frequently Asked Questions for the 2023 Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Sexual Assault Campus Climate (SACC) survey. The FAQs are organized into sections titled: Context; Survey Instrument; Survey Methodology; and Resources. If you have any additional questions that are not answered below, please contact Laura Muna-Landa at Laura.Muna-Landa@claremont.edu, Rima Shah, Empower Center Director, at rshahempower@claremont.edu, or your college's Title IX Coordinator.

Survey Context

1. Why did the 5 undergraduate Claremont Colleges (Claremont McKenna, Harvey Mudd, Pitzer, Pomona, and Scripps; the 5Cs) conduct a sexual assault and campus climate survey this year?

In April 2014, the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault [made a recommendation](#) that all universities and colleges voluntarily conduct sexual assault climate surveys in order to gain insight to help institutions directly address this critical issue. Acting on this recommendation, presidents across the Claremont Consortium decided to participate in the HEDS survey. The 5C Claremont Colleges planned to participate in the survey as part of their regular survey cycle in the spring of 2015 and in the spring of 2018. Following pandemic-related postponements, the survey cycle was resumed in 2023. We honor students' time, sharing, and completion of this survey through analysis and publication of the survey findings.

The HEDS SACC survey is not meant to stand on its own but to serve as part of a holistic framework of reporting, tracking, programming, and support that The Claremont Colleges have committed to address sexual assault across the consortium.

2. Why was the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) instrument selected? The [Higher Education Data Sharing \(HEDS\) Institute](#) is an organization made up of colleges and universities across the US who are committed to advancing undergraduate liberal arts education, inclusive excellence, and student success by sharing data, knowledge and expertise of all kinds. The HEDS instrument was picked from a set of options including a consortium-created survey and a template provided by the 2014 White House Task Force. The primary reasons for this choice were 1) it being an instrument tailored primarily to residential liberal arts colleges such as the 5Cs; and 2) the secure data administration and handling policies that ensure the protection of collected data and of participants' identities.

3. Why did the 5Cs use the same instrument?

One appealing and unique characteristic of The Claremont Colleges is the collaborative nature of our consortium. Being interwoven academically and socially means climate and sexual assault issues exist both at the institutional and consortium level. We use the same [HEDS SACC instrument](#), similarly, so that we can direct action and resources for the student body both as students at individual institutions and as a 5C collective body.

4. How many other institutions participated in the survey and what was the response rate?

In total 74 institutions administered the HEDS SACC survey, with approximately 22,655 students overall responding to the survey and a response rate of 20%. Of these, there were 9,623 students who responded at participating baccalaureate liberal arts institutions. Across the 5C Claremont Colleges, 1,017 students participated in total, for a 5C response rate of 17%.

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5. How was the survey impacted by the COVID pandemic?

The administration of the 2023 survey coincided with the culmination of a period of great disruption. Given the impact of the pandemic – including more than one full academic year of remote learning – meant that at the time the survey was administered many 5C students had not spent extensive time on campus and their experiences are reflective of their time away. This broader perspective helps to understand the lower response rate as well as the responses themselves. Students may not have been as focused on this campus climate issue as they continued to readjust to the academic and residential environment at the 5Cs. For those who did respond, their answers may indicate their feelings of support and community while away from campus – necessarily changing their perspective on the immediacy of support, availability of resources, and connection to the Colleges.

Survey Instrument

6. How was sexual assault defined in the HEDS SACC instrument?

In the HEDS instrument, before survey participants were asked to share any experiences they may have had or encountered, sexual assault was defined below as five specific types of behaviors that were unwanted or for which consent had not been given:

- 1) Touching of a sexual nature (kissing you, touching of private parts, grabbing, fondling, rubbing up against you in a sexual way, even if it was over your clothes)
- 2) Oral sex (someone's mouth or tongue making contact with your genitals, or your mouth or tongue making contact with someone else's genitals)
- 3) Vaginal sex (someone's penis being put in your vagina, or your penis being put into someone else's vagina)
- 4) Anal sex (someone's penis being put in your anus, or your penis being put into someone else's anus)
- 5) Anal or vaginal penetration with a body part other than a penis or tongue, or by an object, like a bottle or candle

7. Could students report more than one incident of sexual assault?

Yes, survey participants were asked whether they experienced multiple incidents of sexual assault, and the instrument allows for the reporting of multiple incidents across several items.

8. Is it possible to provide data for specific groups by race and ethnicity or other demographic classifications?

A paramount priority of this survey is to protect the anonymity of individual students who participated. Given the sensitive nature of the survey content, HEDS provided each school with student-level data files containing limited or combined demographic information. The findings report includes disaggregated results for all the demographic information made available to institutions.

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9. Why did The Claremont Colleges create supplemental questions about dating violence, stalking and domestic violence?

[The Claremont Colleges Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](#) outlines a full range of sexually violent actions that constitute the term sexual harassment as stated under Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (“Clery Act”). These actions, including sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking are characterized by the exertion of power and control over victims of all genders, can cause severe trauma, and often overlap. At The Claremont Colleges, the Title IX Coordinators, the EmPOWER Center, student advocates, and prevention education programs support students impacted by these forms of abuse. It was critical that the HEDS SACC survey collect data on not only sexual assault, but also on the wider definition of sexual harassment to inform our work holistically.

Survey Methodology

10. How and when was the survey administered?

In early spring 2023, following advance email messages from each 5C President, email invitations to take the HEDS SACC electronic survey were sent to undergraduate students at each participating 5C campus. The survey opened January 20, 2023, and closed on February 17, 2023.

11. Why do the percentages for some questions total to more than 100?

Several of the survey questions related to unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault allowed the survey participant to choose multiple responses if those responses applied to them. Responses are not mutually exclusive in those cases, and the percentages may therefore total to more than 100%.

12. Why aren’t written comments included in the analysis?

The 5Cs are balancing transparency of the results while protecting the anonymity of survey participants. Written comments were not included in the 5C report because many of them contain information that has the potential to identify survey participants.

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13. Why doesn't the 5C report contain institutional comparisons? Shouldn't we compare each institution to the consortium?

As you read and reflect on the survey results, please keep in mind that this information does not represent generalizations about The Claremont Colleges community. The 5C HEDS SACC survey report is designed to share important findings from the survey that are relevant across all the schools, to inform policy and resource decision-making at the consortium and institutional levels, and to encourage conversations on campuses as well as across them.

Additionally, there are both methodological and ethical reasons why comparisons are not appropriate. Methodological reasons include differences in survey response demographics and differences in survey response rates by campus. The overall response rate is lower than previous administrations, and there is considerable variation in response rate by institution. This means that institutional comparisons are not only difficult but can be easily interpreted inaccurately. Ethical reasons include considerations such as maintaining the anonymity of survey participants and supporting our collective commitment to shared improvement.

14. Why wasn't the HEDS comparative data for other schools included in the findings? Is it possible to review that information?

In agreeing to administer and publicly report on the HEDS SACCS survey, each institution also agrees to not identify participating institutions by name to any person or organization outside of the consortium, and to ensure that everyone who has access to HEDS peer data recognizes and accepts their obligation to prevent any public disclosure of participating institutions' identities and data. To completely abide by these rules, each of the 5Cs expressly agreed to share combined 5C findings publicly and to exclude HEDS comparative institution data.

15. Can I compare the findings from the 2023 administration of the HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey to the 2015 and 2018 versions?

Each survey report should be treated as a distinct snapshot, rather than longitudinal comparison, for several reasons. First, the survey instrument has changed with each administration in ways that preclude comparison over time. Additionally, changing sample sizes and response rates makes self-selection a potential issue.

Resources

16. Where can I find additional campus and local resources?

Here are links to [on-campus](#), [local](#), and [online](#) support resources for those impacted by sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking.