



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TENNESSEE  
SOUTHERN

**SEXUAL  
MISCONDUCT,  
RELATIONSHIP  
VIOLENCE,  
STALKING, AND  
RETALIATION**  
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 1, 2025 - DECEMBER 31, 2025

OFFICE OF TITLE IX

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SOUTHERN  
433 WEST MADISON STREET  
PULASKI, TENNESSEE 38478

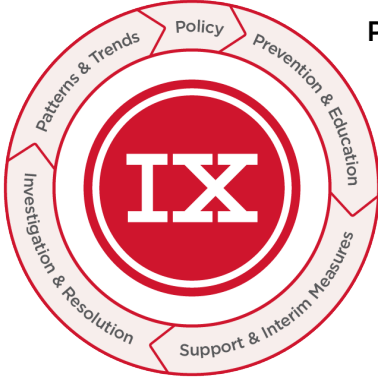
[utsouthern.edu/titleix](https://utsouthern.edu/titleix)

## MISSION & MODEL

The Office of Title IX at the University of Tennessee Southern seeks to provide a working, learning, and living environment free of sexual harassment.

Grounded in the social ecological model, our Title IX commitment emphasizes five key areas:

**Policy.** Our foundation is in the policy and procedures we follow.



**Prevention.** Our goal is to prevent sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, and retaliation before they happen.

**Supportive measures.** Our promise is to provide appropriate supportive measures to individuals involved in the Title IX process.

**Investigation and resolution.** Our commitments to due process, campus safety, and encouraging reporting guide how we investigate and resolve reports.

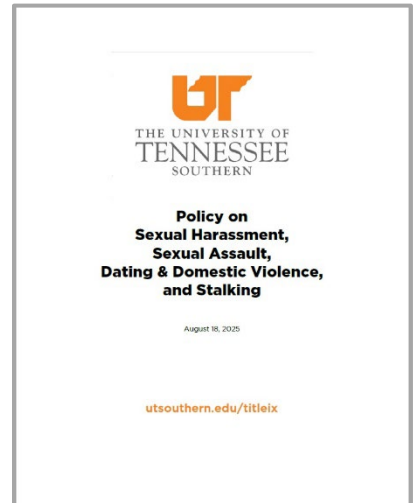
**Patterns and trends.** Our responsibility is to utilize the best available research, evidence-based practice, and our own campus trends in our prevention and response efforts.

## POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL ASSAULT, DATING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND STALKING

The primary purposes of the Policy are to:

- Define, eliminate, prevent, and remedy the effects of Prohibited Conduct
- Identify care, support, and reporting options for students and employees
- Explain the obligations of employees to report Prohibited Conduct to the University
- Identify the grievance procedures the University will follow to thoroughly, equitably, and promptly investigate and resolve reports of Prohibited Conduct

The updated policy is accessible at [utsouthern.edu/titleix](https://utsouthern.edu/titleix) along with additional information about campus procedures, training, and prevention programs related to prohibited conduct. The University will continue to review and update the policy annually to best serve our students, faculty, and staff.



## TITLE IX COORDINATOR

Sarah Catherine Richardson is the University's Title IX Coordinator and oversees the University's response to reports of Prohibited Conduct, including investigations, supportive measures, and hearing procedures. The Title IX Coordinator also leads the University's educational and prevention efforts regarding Prohibited Conduct. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached at [scrich@utsouthern.edu](mailto:scrich@utsouthern.edu) or via 931-424-4073.

## PREVENTION, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

### Mandatory Reporter Trainings

Mandatory reporters are employees who are required to report information about known or suspected Prohibited Conduct to the Office of Title IX. Mandatory Reporters include both faculty and staff personnel from every department on campus, and all are trained each year.

**100%**  
FACULTY &  
STAFF  
TRAINED

**522**  
STUDENTS  
TRAINED

### Faculty & Staff

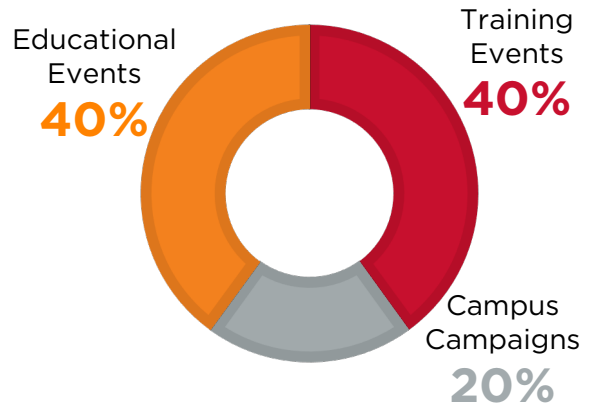
In addition to all regulatory requirements for this annual training, the 2025 training also included information on common missteps and assumptions related to Mandatory Reporters. This year also highlighted the process from report to Complaint to investigation and resolution, providing clarity on procedures and options available to Complainants.

**Students**

Student leaders, particularly Resident Assistants and Peer Academic Leaders, were trained to be resources for their peers regarding Prohibited Conduct and were educated on their own roles as Mandatory Reporters where applicable.

**Student Trainings**

Working closely with the University's First-Year Experience program (FYE), students were educated on consent, reporting, and active bystander interventions before their first day of classes during Welcome Week in August 2025. FYE also hosted a prevention specialist from Center of Hope during class sessions in November 2025 for Bystander Intervention training.



**Events**

**Sexual Assault Awareness Month** - April 2025 featured a variety of events, ranging from education campaigns on international Denim Day, to info sessions for students at *Tea and Title IX* and for the campus community through a Town Hall. Led by the Office of Wellness and Prevention, *Red Flag Relationship* framed healthy relationships as an integral part of wellness, centering consent as part of the Spring's wellness education lineup. Partnering with Center of Hope, the community was invited to participate in an experiential simulation of characters experiencing abusive and controlling relationships.

**Red Sand Project** - This participatory artwork project seeks to increase awareness of human trafficking and exploitation, and created space for conversations about healthy relationships and dating and domestic violence. In her first days in her new role, Chancellor Melinda Arnold participated in the event, sharing remarks on the importance of prevention and awareness in relationship violence and sexual misconduct.

UT SOUTHERN

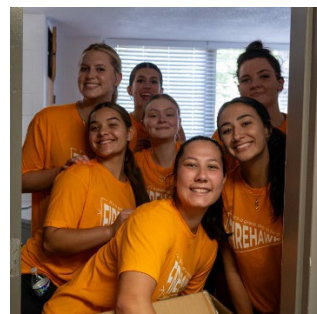
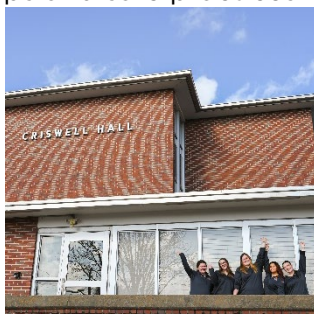
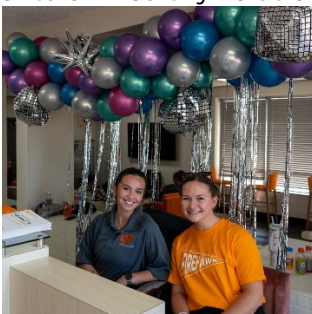
SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH *events*

APRIL 4	8:30-9:30 AM	TEA & TITLE IX FIREHAWK CAFE
APRIL 10	10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	IN THEIR SHOES CAMPUS GREEN
APRIL 7-11	1:00 PM	MINDFUL MILE CAMPUS GREEN
APRIL 16	11-11:30 AM	TITLE IX TOWN HALL ZOOM
APRIL 23	11-11:50 AM	RED FLAG RELATIONSHIP? JOHNSTON
APRIL 30	ALL DAY!	DENIM DAY EVERYWHERE



**Activity Fair** - Representatives from Center of Hope, Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, and Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services visited campus for our annual Activity Fair in August to provide education, resources, and support.

**Residential Life Programming** - Resident Assistants engaged about 100 of their peers across various events on healthy relationships and safe practices.



## Rage Room

As part of the Red Zone Campaign, Center of Hope survivor advocates created a pop up rage room, complete with educational materials on the risks of the “Red Zone” and resources for about Domestic Violence Awareness Month

## Clothesline Project

In collaboration with Center of Hope, students decorated t-shirts with messages of support for survivors and learned about resources and best practices in the process

## Campus Campaigns

In 2025, the Office of Title IX implemented four campuswide campaigns, which included email blasts, tabling, posters, and other passive information shares:

## Healthy Relationships as Wellness

A campuswide campaign to encourage Firehawks to consider their relationships as an integral part of their overall wellness. Partnering with Wellness and Prevention, social and relationship wellness was the focus of the April 2025 wellness campaign. The campaign kicked off with the monthly “Mindful Mile,” where the community joined for a daily 11:00 AM milelong walk where information was shared on statistics, definitions, reporting, resources, and more.



## Domestic Violence Awareness

A digital campaign via email and social media to increase awareness of domestic violence warning signs, the relationship behavior spectrum, and available resources.

## Red Zone

An informational campaign especially targeting first time freshmen, educating students from the beginning of the fall semester to the beginning of Thanksgiving Break, when the majority of college campus sexual assaults happen. Information, statistics, and resources were shared campuswide, and the First Year Experience program helped to educate new students experiencing college life during this season for the first time.



## Relationship Red Flags

A student-initiated campaign in response to increasing concerns that many peers look past “red flags” in relationships as normal behaviors. The campaign created space for students to identify both healthy and potentially concerning behaviors, and provided resources for seeking help and support.

## DEFINITIONS + REPORTS OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- **Sexual Harassment** – conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: (1) An employee of the University conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the University on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; (2) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the University’s education program or activity; or (3) Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and/or Stalking.
- **Sexual Assault** – an umbrella term for any sexual act directed against another person, without consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Sexual Assault includes Rape, Fondling, Incest, and Statutory Rape.
  - **Rape** – the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus, with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.
  - **Fondling** – the touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.
  - **Incest** – sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

**756**  
FACULTY,  
STAFF, &  
STUDENTS  
ENGAGED IN  
PREVENTION  
PROGRAMMING

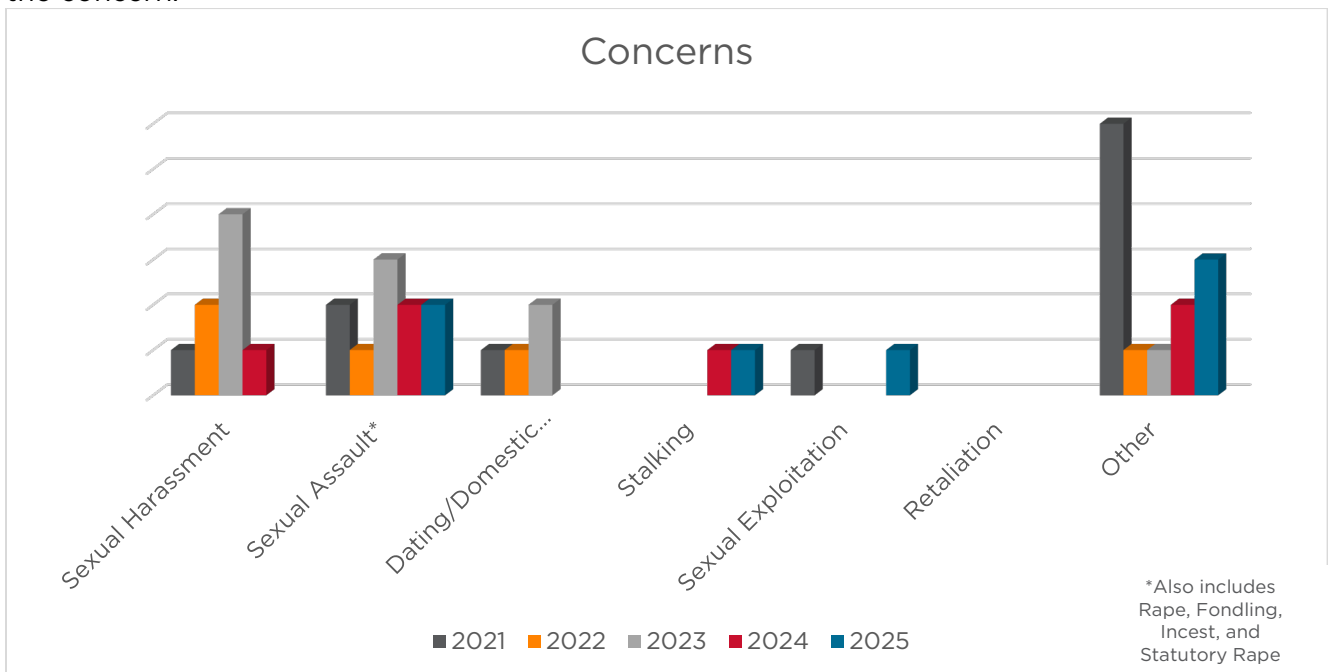
- **Statutory Rape** – sexual intercourse with a person under the statutory age of consent.
- **Dating Violence** – violence committed by a person (A) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and (B) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i)The length of the relationship, (ii) The type of relationship, (iii)The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
- **Domestic Violence** – felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime occurs, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime occurs.
- **Stalking** – engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to— (A) fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or (B) suffer substantial emotional distress.
- **Retaliation** – to intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by this Policy, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing.

## REPORTS OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

2025 marks the fifth year of UT Southern, and as such, the following will reflect not only the data for the calendar year, but also will reflect historical data for comparison purposes. In reviewing the data, the definitions of Prohibited Conduct can be found on pages 3-4. The data is on a calendar-year basis (January 1-December 31) for the year indicated. Specific numbers are only indicated when the total number of unique reports is greater than 5 in order to protect anonymity.

### Concerns

The Office of Title IX defines a concern as information provided that, if true, would not constitute a violation of the Policy, though may violate other standards of the Code or Handbook. The categorization of concerns is most often based on the terminology used by the person bringing the concern.



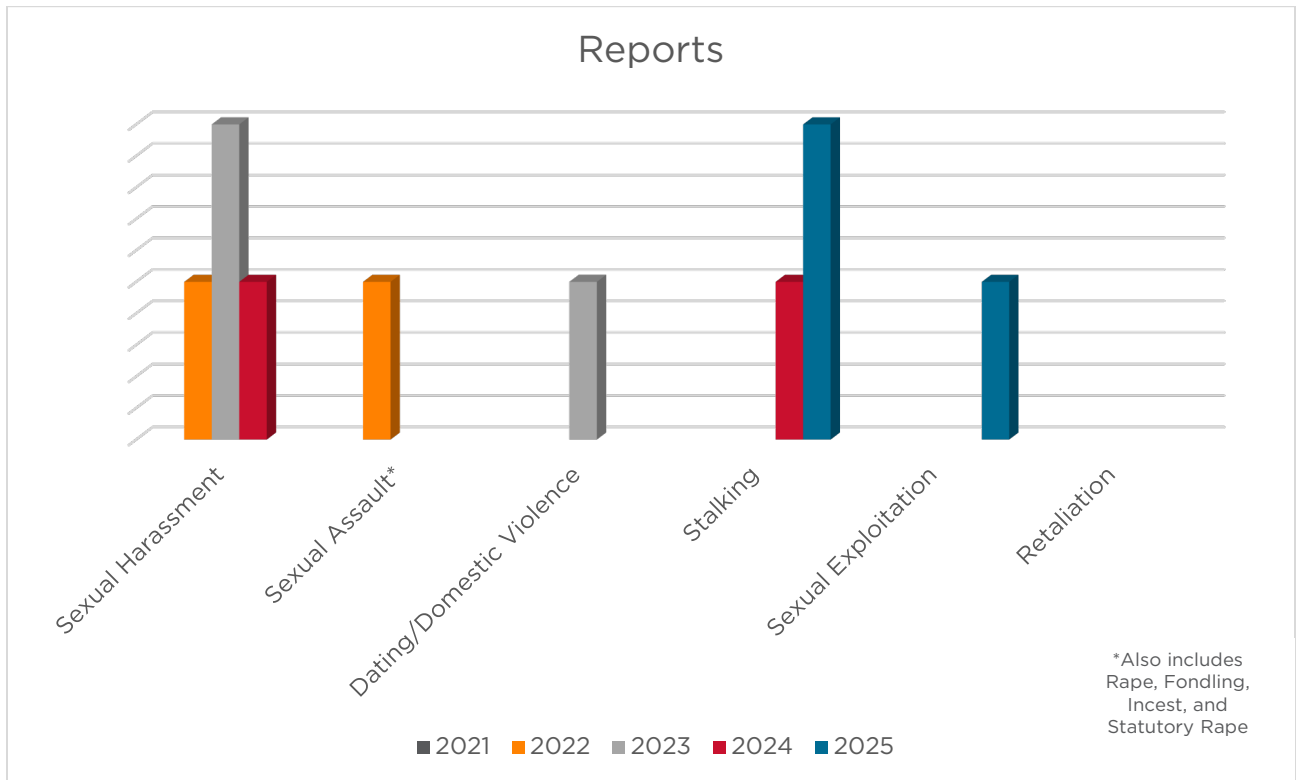
### Reports

The Office of Title IX defines a report as information provided that, if true, would constitute a violation of the Policy, even if no investigation into the report was conducted. This includes reports in which at least one of the following applies:

- The university knows the identity of the respondent, and the respondent is affiliated with the university.
- The identity of the respondent is known to the complainant but is not provided to the university.
- The identity of the respondent is unknown to the complainant.

The data does not include reports made to confidential resources such as the University Clinic or Counseling Services.

If an incident involved more than one type of prohibited conduct (for example, sexual harassment and domestic violence), they are all reflected in this data. The data does not include reports in which the respondent was identified and not affiliated with the university.



### Report Resolutions

In 2025, the reports received were resolved in the manners represented below. Specific numbers are only indicated when the total number of unique reports is greater than 5 in order to protect anonymity.

Report Resolution	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Assault*	Dating/ Domestic Violence	Stalking	Sexual Exploitation	Retaliation
Respondent not identified or unknown; University unable to resolve						
Limited Action: Complainant chose not to file a formal complaint, or the formal complaint was outside the parameters of the policy				✓		
Limited Action: Complainant is unknown or not able to be identified						
Limited Action: Complainant was not responsive to contact; University cannot take further action						
Alternative/Informal Resolution: Resulting in educational sanction or probation						
Alternative/Informal Resolution: Resulting in suspension or separation from the University					✓	
University investigation/hearing						

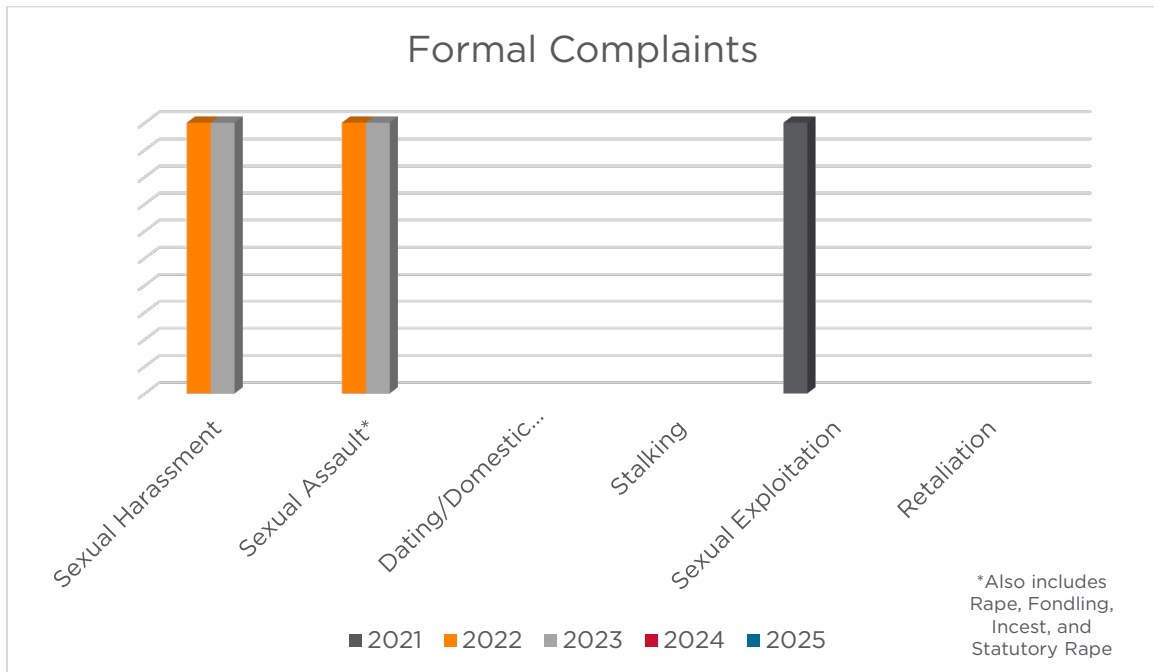
\*Also includes Rape, Fondling, Incest, and Statutory Rape

## Formal Complaints

Formal Complaints are filed with the Office of Title IX.

If an incident involved more than one type of prohibited conduct (for example, sexual harassment and domestic violence), they are all reflected in this data. The data does not include Complaints in which the respondent was identified and not affiliated with the university.

In 2024 and 2025, no Formal Complaints were filed.



## Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are supports that the university can provide to assist individuals in addressing concerns and reports of Prohibited Conduct so students and employees can learn, live, and work in a safe and nondiscriminatory environment. Supportive measures are available even if the Complainant does not file a Formal Complaint, and even if the Complainant does not want to report the incident to the police.

Some supportive measures, especially referrals, are available for concerns that, if true, would not constitute a violation of the Policy, though may violate other standards of the Code or Handbook.

After receiving a report of Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will take immediate and appropriate steps to ensure that individuals are made aware of all available supportive measures and reporting options, including filing a report with the police and/or filing a Formal Complaint with the Office of Title IX. The most common supportive measures were tracked (see below), although additional supportive measures are available. An individual may receive as many supportive measures as they accept.

In 2025, the supportive measures utilized are represented below. Specific numbers are only indicated when the total number of unique reports is greater than 5 in order to protect anonymity.

Supportive Measure	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Assault*	Dating/ Domestic Violence	Stalking	Sexual Exploitation	Retaliation	Other
Academic Support							✓
Educational Meeting				✓			
Housing Support							
No Contact Directive					✓		
Referral to Medical Provider							
Referral to Mental Health Provider							✓
Referral to Human Resources or Student Conduct							
Referral to Security		✓		✓			✓
Other							✓

\*Also includes Rape, Fondling, Incest, and Statutory Rape