

7 August 2023

To All Vice Chancellors
CC: University Management

Dear Vice Chancellor

RELEASE OF FOUR MORE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DHET'S GBV POLICY FRAMEWORK

HIGHER HEALTH, under the guidance of the PSET Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Technical Task Team, has developed a set of model Guidelines and Protocols, for implementation of the DHET's Policy Framework to address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System (launched by the Honourable Minister Blade Nzimande in July 2020) across all campuses. The first set of Guidelines and two Protocols were released in September 2021. They were:

- Sexual and Gender Related Misconduct Guidelines for the Post School Education and Training Sector
- Protocol on Rape and Sexual Assault
- Code of Ethics

Following extensive consultations, the HIGHER HEALTH Board in support from the PSET GBV TTT has now approved a further four protocols for release. These are:

- Protocol on Campus Safety and Security Minimum Standards
- Protocol on Safety in Private Accommodation
- Protocol on Safety in In-Campus Residences
- Protocol on Staff-Student Relationships

HIGHER HEALTH will be hosting a webinar to engage on the 4 released protocols with the sector.

Details are as follows:

Date: 22 August 2023

Time: 11h00 – 13h00

RSVP: <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/dcea8e9a-e87b-4031-9b6c-0cc4ba7af26b@a9fa0db6-45f9-4629-b253-927d5a93db5c/registration>

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Directors: Prof W de Villiers (Chairperson), Ms P Dipiloane, Ms S Mahlobogoane, Dr P Matutu, Prof T Mayekiso, Ms S Mncwabe, Prof N Phaswana-Mafuya, Dr D Tromp, Prof R Ahluwalia (CEO)

Copies of these Protocols are attached. The Protocols that accompany minimum standards are a model framework document that PSET institutions can adopt or adapt, with key underlying principles to which all institutions must adhere. Our Protocols define managing cases of Gender-based Violence on campuses, as well as focusing on building resilience towards preventing new cases of GBV on campuses. The Protocols define what behaviour constitutes GBV on campuses and sets out what support and assistance measures institutions should provide. They deal with how complaints must be reported, the setting up of Responsible Offices, pursuing informal and formal processes to handle complaints and the creation of disciplinary tribunals, among other things.

The PSET GBVTTT are currently working on developing the following additional draft protocols:

- Protocol on the Statement of Complaint
- Protocol on Whistleblowing
- Protocol on Management of SGBV by Responsible Office
- Protocol on Staff and Student Travel

The consultations are underway with sector experts, and stakeholders such as the NPA, DOJ, SAPS, civil society etc. These Protocols will be released in due course.

Our PSET institutions are a microcosm of the bigger society where GBV is a deeply-rooted pandemic. GBV poses a serious threat to our students and staff, affects academic excellence, sectoral throughput and our education and skills development aspirations for our country. It is widely known that students and staff entering academic institutions bear the unwarranted cost of the threat and reality of being raped, sexually assaulted, harassed and stalked. The above instruments will support our institutions and management to provide a comprehensive response to cases of sexual and gender related misconduct across all our campuses.

Since 2021, HIGHER HEALTH has been running a comprehensive capacitation programme for key role-players, including university management and senior staff; senior residence staff including wardens and house mothers; private accommodation staff and managers; frontline staff including in-house campus security and protection services; transformation managers; and staff working in student support services on the Guidelines and Protocols. Towards the end of 2022 this capacity building and training programme had reached 7 706 staff members and more than five hundred student leaders on the DHET GBV Policy Framework and HIGHER HEALTH Protocols released in 2021.

HIGHER HEALTH will now initiate another Capacity Building and Skills Training programme on the newly released protocols, from August 2023. The training will be conducted provincially as well as institutionally across the country. For further queries, please contact Stephanie Hendry (Stephanie.H@higherhealth.ac.za).

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We wish your management and staff well as we engage on this difficult journey of fighting GBV and sexual misconduct, within the PSET system. We are ready and willing to support your institution whenever required.

Sincerely,



Prof Ramneek Ahluwalia
Chief Executive Officer

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