

2021 Dartmouth College Sexual Misconduct Student Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Overview of the Survey

Sexual violence is antithetical to a community of teaching, learning, and care. At Dartmouth, we remain committed to supporting the members of our community and taking actions on our campus that move us closer to ending sexual violence. Since the 2017 Sexual Misconduct Survey, we have continued our progress in three distinct areas: (1) preventing and reducing the prevalence of sexual misconduct and harassment in all forms; (2) supporting Dartmouth community members impacted by sexual misconduct; and (3) increasing the education of the community on what constitutes Prohibited Conduct and options for receiving support and remedies.

The 2021 Dartmouth Sexual Misconduct Survey is a follow-up to the 2015 Association of American Universities Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, which was administered at Dartmouth and 26 other institutions, with analysis provided by Westat, as well as the 2017 Sexual Misconduct Survey, which mirrored the 2015 survey and was administered and analyzed at Dartmouth. The results of both previous surveys are available for reference ([see Dartmouth's Office of Institutional Research web site](#)). The survey is an important part of our continued effort launched in 2015 by President Philip Hanlon's Moving Dartmouth Forward plan designed to understand the extent and effects of sexual violence among our populations and use the data to inform our policies, prevention, and response.

This document is a brief summary of the 2021 survey results, providing a high-level view of key findings. Full details with breakouts by student level and by gender, which are important for a complete understanding of the subject matter undertaken in this survey, are available in the online dashboard. Comparisons to the 2017 survey results are included in this summary to facilitate understanding of trendlines; comparisons to 2015 results can be found in the 2017 report, and in selected areas of the online dashboards.

Survey Design

In 2014, the Association of American Universities (AAU) developed a survey to examine the attitudes and experiences of undergraduate and graduate/professional students with respect to sexual assault and sexual misconduct. In 2015, Dartmouth conducted this survey on campus. For details on the 2015 AAU Survey and its development, [please see the 2015 FAQs](#).

In 2017, a small working group at Dartmouth reviewed and revised the 2015 AAU instrument for administration at Dartmouth. Changes were informed by the 2015 results and Dartmouth's desire to learn more about certain topics, but an effort was made to maintain consistent wording whenever possible in order to allow comparisons over time. For details on the 2017 survey instrument and results, please see the [2017 report](#).

In 2020, a small Dartmouth working group again met to consider previous survey instruments and findings and prepare for a new survey administration. Changes for the 2021 administration include revised language on questions related to sexual assault, updated names of certain Dartmouth campus and community resources, and an updated timeframe for when incidents happened.

2021 Survey Administration and Response Rates

The survey was administered to students between April 2 and April 23, 2021. Undergraduate and graduate/professional students over the age of 18 were invited to participate (N=6,913) and a \$10 amazon.com gift card was promised and delivered to all those who completed the survey.

A total of 3,006 responses were received for an overall student response rate of 43%. The response rate for undergraduates was 42% and for graduate and professional students 48%.

Presentation of Results

In presenting results, Dartmouth's intention is to provide a full set of information in complete, accurate and accessible format, without exposing individuals or individual responses. To that end, results are communicated in the following ways:

- An Executive Summary, designed to communicate key findings to a broad audience.
- A user-friendly, web-based dashboard containing the aggregated responses to all questions, available on the Dartmouth web site. To protect against the potential identification of individuals, best practice is followed of masking data where the response count is fewer than 5.
- A user-friendly, web-based dashboard containing the aggregated responses to all questions, with no data masked when cell sizes are small. This dashboard is available to Dartmouth's Title IX Coordinator, who provides access to others within the College as appropriate.

Since not all students responded to the survey, results from the initial (2015) survey administration were presented in the Executive Summary as weighted estimates.¹ In order to protect comparability, the same practice was used in the Executive Summary of the 2017 results and in this Executive Summary of the 2021 results. Since the unweighted data are broadly representative of the population and are more straightforward to interpret, the 2021 results are presented in weighted and unweighted form in the online dashboard.

The online dashboards are constructed to show all responses to all questions, but data are suppressed when the response count is 5 or fewer. While suppressing data in the case of small cell sizes is important to preserve confidentiality, it can have the unintended effect of rendering small populations invisible. This is especially problematic in a survey like this, where across-the-board breakouts by gender are warranted because of the nature of the topic, and where some questions appear only to a subset of respondents, depending on how they answered one or more of the preceding questions. This means there are a number of items for which the count of respondents will, categorically, be small.

On this survey, students who selected “Transgender woman,” “Transgender man,” “Genderqueer or gender non-conforming,” “Questioning,” or “Not listed” are grouped in the results as “TGQN.” Even after grouping responses in this way, the numbers on some questions are as low as a single response from this group, and failing to mask data could expose individuals. While these data are not discussed in the Executive Summary and are suppressed in the public dashboard, they are not suppressed in the internal dashboard that is available to the Dartmouth personnel who are responsible for prevention efforts and the care and support of individual students and student groups.

Even when the number of responses from a small group is high enough that the data are not suppressed, the relatively low response counts sometimes create percentages that seem disproportionately high, and it is important to keep this in mind when interpreting results.

Key Results

Overall, the prevalence of harm is lower in the 2021 results compared to the 2017 results. The survey was administered about a year after pandemic-related social distancing went into effect on campus. Many survey items refer to a time period defined as “Since you have been a student at Dartmouth...”, which for some respondents can go back to 2017 or earlier. Some items ask specifically about the current school year which, because of the pandemic, was a year in which many students were not on campus, or were on campus but discouraged from gathering in groups. The survey results do not provide a definitive way to distinguish between changes that stem from substantial Dartmouth

¹ Weighted estimates use a raking procedure. Specifically, the initial step was to create a base-weight for each respondent. A census was conducted at Dartmouth and a base weight of one was assigned to each respondent. The base weight was adjusted to reflect non-response. This adjusted the base weight to the demographic data available on the frame (Deming and Stephen, 1940; Deville, Särndal, and Sautory, 1993; Cervantes and Brick, 2008). The variables used in the raking procedure included: 1) Gender (Male/Female); 2) Age Group (18-20, 21-23, 24-26, and 27+); 3) Year in School (Undergraduate freshman, Undergraduate sophomore, Undergraduate junior, Undergraduate senior, and Graduate/Professional year); and 4) Race/Ethnicity (Hispanic, White, Black, Other race, Nonresident alien).

programming and interventions since 2017, and changes that might stem from a reduction in student contact during a pandemic year.

PREVALENCE

The survey asks about two behaviors comprising sexual contact: penetration and sexual touching, both of which are defined in the appendix to the Executive Summary. Counts include attempted as well as completed acts. The survey further asks about four tactics, also described in the appendix: physical or threat of physical force, incapacitation, coercion, and absence of affirmative consent. Prevalence rates are estimated by counting the number of students who have been a victim at least once over the time period of interest. Nonconsensual sexual contact events are counted only once even if penetration and sexual touching may have happened in the same incident. Counting rules conform to those established by the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting and the Clery Act, and are described in the appendix.

In 2021, 10.8% percent of all Dartmouth students (undergraduate and graduate/professional) report having experienced completed or attempted nonconsensual sexual contact by physical force or incapacitation since entering Dartmouth. This figure was 15.8% in 2017, and 13% in 2015.

- The prevalence rate is substantially higher for female (16.2%) and TGQN (22.5%) students than for male students (4.5%). See note above in Presentation of Results section when interpreting these results.
- Prevalence is higher for undergraduate (14.3%) than for graduate/professional (3.6%) students.
- Undergraduates who identify as TGQN report the highest rate (25.5%). Graduate/professional students who identify as male report the lowest rates (1.5%).
- The most notable change has occurred among female undergraduates, whose prevalence rate remains high at 21.5% in 2021, but is lower than 34.2% in 2017.

The prevalence rate above includes both penetration and sexual touching. **The prevalence rate for all students for penetration alone decreased from 6.8% in 2017 to 5.9% in 2021, but there are differences by group:**

- For female students, the prevalence rate for penetration in 2021 is 8.7%, down from 11.6% in 2017. Changes for undergraduates and for graduate/professional students are very slight.
- The prevalence rate for penetration for male students went up from 2.0% in 2017 to 2.6% in 2021.

HARASSMENT

The survey asks about five forms of harassment by a student or someone employed by or otherwise associated with Dartmouth. **Overall, the percentage of students who have experienced harassment is lower in 2021 compared to 2017 for all forms of harassment listed. However, the pattern is less consistent when results are broken out by gender.**

- Female students continue to experience higher rates of harassment than male students, and TGQN students continue to experience higher rates of harassment than either female or male students.

- Compared to 2017, fewer female students in 2021 report experiencing any of the five forms of harassment asked about on the survey. “Continued to ask you to go out, get dinner, have drinks or have sex even though you said, ‘No’?” is down to 19% from 23%, for example, and someone “Made inappropriate or offensive comments about your or someone else’s body, appearance or sexual activities?” is at 49% in 2021 compared to 59% in 2017.
- Male students report the same or fewer harassment incidents compared to 2017. For example, 6% of males in both 2021 and 2017 said yes, someone had “Continued to ask you to go out, get dinner, have drinks or have sex even though you said, ‘No’.” In 2021 31% of males said someone had “Made inappropriate or offensive comments about your or someone else’s body, appearance or sexual activities,” compared to 40% in 2017.
- TGQN students experienced a reduction in some forms of harassment, and an increase in others.

DARTMOUTH POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY SEXUAL ASSAULT

There has been a substantial increase in the percentage of students who have knowledge of the services and resources offered by the College for those affected by sexual assault and sexual misconduct.

- 73% of students in 2021 agree or strongly agree that they know where to go to get help on campus, up from 61% in 2017.
- 54% of students agree or strongly agree that they understand what happens if a student reports an incident of sexual assault at Dartmouth, up from 32% in 2017.
- 60% agree or strongly agree that they know how to make a report of sexual assault, up from 40% in 2017.
- The 2021 increase in these items holds across all genders and both student levels.
- Increases in knowledge of services and resources are roughly consistent across gender groups.

AWARENESS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY DARTMOUTH RESOURCES

When asked how aware they are of services provided by specific campus and community resources in regards to sexual misconduct, students indicated increased awareness in most cases.

- 57% of students in 2021 said they were very aware or extremely aware of the Title IX Office. In 2017, 25% said they were very aware or extremely aware of the Title IX Coordinator. Note that the question was changed in 2021 to ask about the Office rather than the Coordinator)
- Substantially fewer students in 2021 indicated knowledge of Dartmouth Department of Safety and Security compared to 2017.

DARTMOUTH-PROVIDED TRAINING AND RESOURCES

In general, student responses in 2021 reflect the increase in Dartmouth-provided training and resources:

- 77% of students say orientation included a training or information session about sexual assault or sexual misconduct, compared to 57% in 2017. 93% found it useful.
- More students in 2021 report receiving information about how to report a sexual assault (62%, up from 44% in 2017), about where to get help if someone they know is sexually assaulted (66%,

up from 51%), or about Title IX protections (79%, up from 37%). Fewer students in 2021 report receiving information about how to intervene as a bystander (57%, down from 73%).

- In all items relating to student's level of understanding of Dartmouth resources, results show increased understanding for all students, all levels, and all genders. This includes understanding of what behaviors are included in the College's definition of sexual assault or harassment, the process that occurs after a complaint has been filed, how to make a report, the role of the Title IX Coordinator, and more.

CONFIDENCE IN DARTMOUTH'S ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO REPORTS

The majority of Dartmouth students look favorably on how Dartmouth would react if a student reported an incident of sexual assault or sexual misconduct, though the percentage of students who think these actions are "likely" or "very likely" is lower in 2021 than in 2017.

- Students have greatest confidence that the College would maintain the privacy of the person making the report (77% think it is "likely" or "very likely"); they are least confident that Dartmouth would take action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault or sexual misconduct (41% think this is "likely" or "very likely").
- From 2017 to 2021, the greatest change is for "Dartmouth would take the report of sexual assault or sexual misconduct seriously," which 62% of students thought was "likely" or "very likely" in 2021, down from 72% in 2017. The items with the smallest declines are "The College would maintain the privacy of the person making the report" and "Dartmouth would conduct a fair investigation," both of which had 2% reduction in students saying the action is "likely" or "very likely" in 2021 compared to 2017.
- While female students are less likely overall to have confidence in Dartmouth's response, the decline in confidence across items is about the same for female and male students.
- Undergraduate students are more likely to be confident in Dartmouth's responses in 2021 than are graduate/professional students, and positive responses actually increased slightly among undergraduates for "The College would maintain the privacy of the person making the report," "Dartmouth would handle the report fairly" (both by 1 percentage point), and "Dartmouth would conduct a fair investigation" (by 3 percentage points).

CONFIDENCE IN HOW PEOPLE WOULD REACT TO SOMEONE MAKING A REPORT

Students were asked how they thought people would react to someone reporting an incident of sexual misconduct and/or sexual assault at Dartmouth. **Overall, confidence in the reactions of other people is high, but students in 2021 have more confidence in each other compared to 2017, and less confidence in faculty and staff. Male students are a little more positive than female students about the reactions of others.**

When asked how other students would react to someone reporting an incident:

- 66% said it is "unlikely" or "very unlikely" that Dartmouth students would label the person making a report a troublemaker. This is up from 56% in 2017.
- 80% said it is "likely" or "very likely" Dartmouth students would support the person making the report, up from 72% in 2017.

When the same questions were asked about how faculty and staff would react to someone reporting an incident:

- 65% said it is “unlikely” or “very unlikely” Dartmouth faculty and staff would label the person making the report a troublemaker, which is down from 68% in 2017.
- 71% said Dartmouth faculty and staff would be “likely” or “very likely” to support the person making the report, down from 76% in 2017.

Students are concerned for the person making the report:

- 47% think it is “likely” or “very likely” the academic achievement of the person making the report would suffer, though this is down from 53% in 2017.
- 33% think it is “likely” or “very likely” the alleged offender(s) or their friends would try to get back (retaliate) at the person making the report, though this is down from 35% in 2017.

BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR

Student responses to the questions about their own behavior as bystanders show progress overall, but there is not progress in their sense of being able to effect change.

- 44% of students say it is “True” or “Very True” they have recently attended a program about sexual assault or sexual misconduct, up from 27% in 2017.
- 17% say it is “True” or “Very True” that they have been or are currently involved in efforts to end sexual assault and sexual misconduct on campus, compared to 16% in 2017.
- 41% say it is “True” or “Very True” that they are planning to learn more about the problem of sexual assault or sexual misconduct at Dartmouth, up from 36% in 2017.
- 12% say it is “True” or “Very True” that they have not done anything to learn about sexual assault or sexual misconduct, down from 22% in 2017.
- The proportion of students who think they can do something about sexual assault or sexual misconduct is high at 62% in 2021, and 65% in 2017.

Conclusions

These results confirm widely known patterns of sexual violence nationally. Results from the 2021 survey administration at Dartmouth indicate there has been progress here since the last survey was administered in 2017. Improvements have been measured in prevalence rates, incidence of harassment rates, delivery of training and resources, confidence in the behaviors of others, and levels of knowledge about Dartmouth definitions, offices, and services. The Sexual Violence Prevention Project began in earnest with the class of 2023 and may account for some of the changes in awareness. In addition, the Title IX Office increased the number of staff members, increasing the training and workshops they could provide as well as accessibility to resources.

Even so, the rates of sexual assault and misconduct continue to be unacceptable, emphasizing the continued need for prevention and education efforts. There continues to be disproportionate impact on female and TGQN students. Additionally, it is important to further reduce knowledge gaps, and to

address the level of confidence students have in how Dartmouth faculty and staff would respond to someone reporting an incident.

Dartmouth continues its commitment to addressing sexual violence and will continue to use survey findings from this and prior years to inform the College's efforts to combat sexual assault and misconduct at Dartmouth.

Definitions used in the Sexual Misconduct Survey²:

Two Types of Nonconsensual Sexual Contact:

Penetration (completed and attempted)³:

- when one person puts a penis, finger, or object inside someone else's vagina or anus, or when someone's mouth or tongue makes contact with someone else's genitals (2015)
- when one person puts a penis, finger, or object inside someone else's vagina or anus, or sexual contact involving oral-to-genital contact without penetration (2017)
- sexual intercourse (anal, oral, or vaginal), including penetration with a body part (e.g., penis, finger, hand, or tongue) or an object, or requiring another to penetrate themselves with a body part or an object, however slight (2021)

Sexual Touching:

- kissing
- touching your breast, chest, crotch, groin, or buttocks
- grabbing, groping or rubbing against you in a sexual way, even if the touching is over your clothes

Four Tactics:

1. Physical force

Incidents that involved physical force or threats of physical force against you. Force could include someone holding you down with their body weight, pinning your arms, hitting or kicking you, or using or threatening to use a weapon against you.

2. Incapacitation

Incidents when you were unable to consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, asleep or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol.

3. Coercion

Incidents when someone coerced you by threatening serious non-physical harm or promising rewards such that you felt you must comply. Examples include:

- threatening to give you bad grades or cause trouble for you at work
- promising good grades or a promotion at work
- threatening to share damaging information about you with your family, friends or authority figures
- threatening to post damaging information about you online

² Unless noted otherwise, definitions remain consistent with the 2015 Association of American Universities Survey.

³ Wording changed from 2015 to 2017 and 2021. All three versions are provided for reference.

4. Absence of Affirmative Consent⁴

Incidents that occurred without your active, ongoing voluntary agreement (2015 and 2017) / affirmative and willing agreement (2021). Examples include someone:

- initiating sexual activity despite your refusal
- ignoring your cues to stop or slow down
- went ahead without checking in or while you were still deciding
- otherwise failed to obtain your consent

Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct:

1. Harassment

Situations in which a student at Dartmouth, or someone employed by or otherwise associated with Dartmouth said or did something that interfered with your academic or professional performance, limited your ability to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities, or created an intimidating, hostile or offensive social, residential, academic or work environment.

Specific behaviors:

- made sexual remarks or told jokes or stories that were insulting or offensive to you
- made inappropriate or offensive comments about your or someone else's body, appearance or sexual activities
- said crude or gross sexual things to you or tried to get you to talk about sexual matters when you didn't want to
- emailed, texted, tweeted, phoned, or instant messaged offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures or videos to you that you didn't want
- continued to ask you to go out, get dinner, have drinks or have sex even though you said, "No"

2. Stalking⁵

Instances where someone behaved in a way that made you afraid for your personal safety, fearful of harm or bodily injury to self or others, or caused substantial emotional distress (2015 and 2017)/caused you to fear bodily injury or experience substantial emotional distress (2021). Has a student, or someone employed by or otherwise associated with Dartmouth...

- made unwanted phone calls, sent emails, voice, text or instant messages, or posted messages, pictures or videos on social networking sites in a way that made you afraid for your personal safety
- showed up somewhere or waited for you when you did not want that person to be there in a way that made you afraid for your personal safety (2015)

⁴ Wording changed from 2015 and 2017 to 2021. Both versions are provided for reference.

⁵ Wording changed from 2015 to 2017 and 2021. Both versions are provided for reference.

- showed up somewhere or waited for you when you did not want that person to be there in a way that made you afraid for your personal safety or caused substantial emotional distress (e.g., waiting outside of your classroom, residence, or office) (2017 and 2021)
- spied on, watched or followed you either in person or using devices or software in a way that made you afraid for your personal safety (2015)
- spied on, watched or followed you either in person or using devices or software in a way that made you afraid for your personal safety or cause substantial emotional distress (2017 and 2021)

For 2015, to be considered stalking, the respondent had to say additionally that these behaviors, either singly or in combination, occurred more than once and were done by the same person.

For 2017 and 2021, it was considered stalking if the respondent said yes to any of the behaviors.

3. Intimate Partner Violence (2015)/Dating and Domestic Violence (2017)/Relationship and Interpersonal Violence (2021)⁶

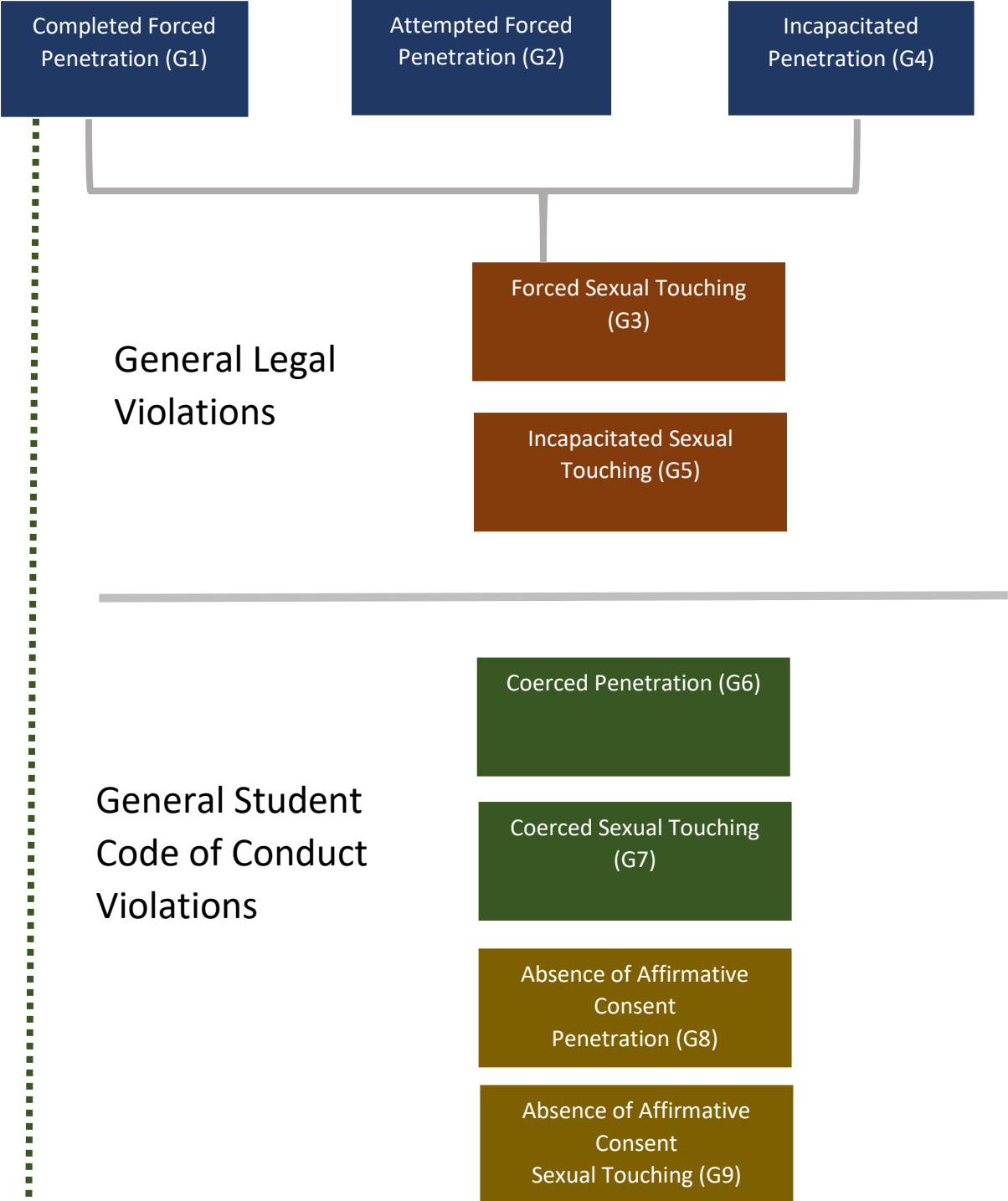
2015	2017 and 2021
<p>Questions administered to anyone who said they had been in any ‘partnered relationship’ since enrolling in college.</p>	<p>Questions administered to anyone who said they had been physically or romantically intimate with someone.</p>
<p><i>Partnered relationship included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • casual relationship or hook-up • steady or serious relationship • marriage, civil union, domestic partnership or cohabitation 	<p><i>Physically or romantically intimate included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been on a date • Been in a romantic/intimate relationship • Hooked up with someone, made out with someone, had sex with someone • Been in a steady or serious relationship • Been married, in a civil union, domestic partnership or cohabited with someone
<p><i>Since you’ve been a student at Dartmouth, has a partner...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • controlled or tried to control you. Examples could be when someone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – kept you from going to classes or pursuing your educational goals – did not allow you to see or talk with friends or family – made decisions for you such as, where you go or what you wear or eat – threatened to “out” you to others • threatened to physically harm you, someone you love, or themselves • used any kind of physical force against you. Examples could be when someone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – bent your fingers or bit you – choked, slapped, punched or kicked you – hit you with something other than a fist – attacked you with a weapon, or otherwise physically hurt or injured you 	<p><i>Since you have been a student at Dartmouth, has a partner...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • controlled or tried to control you. Examples could be when someone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – kept you from going to classes or pursuing your educational goals – did not allow you to see or talk with friends or family – made decisions for you such as, where you went or what you wore or ate – threatened to “out” you to others • threatened to physically harm you, someone you love, or themselves • used any kind of physical force against you. Examples could be when someone had done the following to you <u>against your will</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – scratched, bent your fingers or bit you – pushed, grabbed and/or shoved you – choked, slapped, punched or kicked you – hit you with something other than a fist – attacked you with a weapon, or otherwise physically hurt or injured you

⁶ Wording changed from 2015 to 2017 and 2021. Both versions are provided for reference.

Prevalence Rates: Deduplication Hierarchy Rules

In order to conform to the counting rules established by the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program and the Clery Act, Dartmouth categorized and counted incidents that included both nonconsensual sexual penetration and sexual touching solely as a penetration offense.

Hierarchy for Categorizing Incidents



General Legal Violations (behaviors and tactics):

Penetration:

- 1) Physical force or threat of physical force (completed G1 or attempted G2)
- 2) Incapacitation (G4)

Sexual Touching:

- 1) Physical force or threat of physical force (G3)
- 2) Incapacitation (G5)

General Student Code of Conduct Violations (behaviors and tactics):

Penetration:

- 1) Coercion (G6)
- 2) Absence of affirmative consent (AAC) (G8)

Sexual Touching:

- 1) Coercion (G7)
- 2) Absence of affirmative consent (AAC) (G9)

Deduplication Hierarchy Rules

1. Completed forced penetration without incapacitation (G1, no G4)
2. Attempted forced penetration without incapacitation (G2, no G1 or G4)
3. Completed penetration by incapacitation without any forced or attempted forced penetration (G4, no G1 or G2)
4. Both completed penetration by incapacitation and penetration by physical force (either completed and attempted) (G4 and (G1 or G2))
5. Sexual touching by force without incapacitation (G3, no G1, G2, G4, G5)
6. Sexual touching by incapacitation without force (G5, no G1, G2, G3, G4)
7. Sexual touching by both force and incapacitation (G3 and G5, no G1, G2, G4)
8. Penetration by coercion (G6, no G1-G5)
9. Sexual touching by coercion (G7, no G1-G6)
10. Penetration by absence of affirmative consent (G8, no G1-G7)
11. Sexual touching by absence of affirmative consent (G9, no G1-G8)