

Facts on USAFA Sexual Violence

Statistics are from the 2018 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey (SAGR) and DoD Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at Military Service Academies, Academic Program Year 2017-2018 and its appendices/annexes, unless otherwise noted.

Sexual Violence Is Increasing

- 15.1% of USAFA women and 1.8% of USAFA men experienced Unwanted Sexual Contact (USC). USC is a criminal act under the UCMJ.¹
 - Rates of Unwanted Sexual Contact at the Academy continue to be exponentially higher than Active Service (USAF Women – 4.3%, USAF Men 0.5%).
 - These are the highest levels since tracking began in 2006.
 - Risk of re-victimization² for women is 25.5% and 7.7% for men.
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Retaliation is Common

- At USAFA, 43% of female cadets who reported USC perceived ostracism, 31% negative outcomes³ and 25% professional reprisal.
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Low Trust and Satisfaction in the System

- USAFA women indicate a significant lack of trust in the Academy if they were to experience Sexual Assault⁴ in the future:
 - 30% indicate they would trust the Academy to protect their privacy,

¹ Unwanted sexual contact refers to a range of activities prohibited by the UCMJ, including uninvited and unwelcome completed or attempted sexual intercourse, sodomy (oral or anal sex), penetration by an object, and the unwanted touching of genitalia and other sexually related areas of the body.

² Re-victimization is when a survivor of USC experiences it again.

³ Negative behaviors from cadet peers or leadership that occurred without a valid military purpose, and may include physical or psychological force, threats, or abusive or unjustified treatment that results in physical or mental harm.

⁴ DoDD 6495.01 defines sexual assault as any “intentional sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent” (Department of Defense, 2015b). Under this definition, sexual assault includes rape, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, forcible sodomy (forced oral or anal sex), or attempts to commit these acts. “Consent” shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the victim to offer physical resistance.

- 39% indicate they would trust the Academy to ensure their safety and
- 37% indicate they would trust the Academy to treat them with dignity and respect following the reported incident.
- 43% of USAFA women did not report a Sex-Based Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) violation⁵ because they did not believe anything would be done.
- 38% of USAFA women felt that Cadet Leaders make efforts to stop Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment⁶ (down from 49% in 2016).
- 33% of women thought their evaluations or chances for leadership positions would suffer if they reported sex-based MEO violations.

Sexual Harassment is Alarming High

- 46% of USAFA women and 13% of USAFA men faced sexual harassment.
- Organizational tolerance of sexual harassment is likely to create a permissive climate for USC to occur⁷. Results from the *2018 SAGR* showed about one-third of USAFA women who experienced USC said they experienced an unwanted behavior from the same alleged offender before the USC.

⁵ Sex-Based Military Equal Opportunity Violations: These categories of behaviors include sexual harassment (i.e., sexually hostile work environment and sexual quid pro quo) and gender discrimination.

⁶ The DoD military sexual harassment policy was defined in 1995, and revised in 2015 in DoDD 1350.2 as: “A form of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person’s job, pay, or career, or

Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person, or

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

⁷ Although undesirable on its own, sexual harassment is also related to sexual assault. Research has shown organizational tolerance of sexual harassment and related behavior is likely to create a permissive climate for USC to occur (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Turchik & Wilson, 2010). In addition, would-be offenders often work along a spectrum of behaviors, increasing in severity. This construct is known as the **continuum of harm**. Indeed, many types of violence (e.g., bullying, stalking, sexual harassment and sexual assault) are interconnected and often share causes, risks, and protective factors (e.g., Espelage, Low, Polanin, & Brown, 2013; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Wilkins, Tsao, Hertz, Davis, & Klevens, 2014). Military-specific research also supports this connection between unwanted experiences, such as sexual harassment (both sexual *quid pro quo* and sexually hostile work environment) and a significant increase in the likelihood of rape or sexual assault (Sadler et al., 2003; Cook et al., 2014; Severance, Klahr, & Coffey, 2016; Barry et al., 2017).

- USAFA Women who experienced sexual harassment were 7 times more likely to experience Sexual Assault and USAFA Men were 11 times more likely.

Vast Majority of Cases Go Unreported

- 87% of USAFA Women experiencing USC did not report
- The Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies for Academic Program Year 2017-2018 identifies that across all three Military Service Academies (MSA) only 12% of sexual assault cases are reported.