

Social safety statement

The Dutch Universities, united in the VSNU (Association of Universities in The Netherlands) have issued the following statement on social safety (April 2019):

Dutch universities are committed to providing their students, employees, and visitors with a safe environment. Of crucial importance to Dutch universities are collegiality, integrity, equality, respect, openness, and attention to each other.

Dutch universities do not tolerate any undesirable conduct, including sexual and general harassment, aggression, bullying, or discrimination. This message is communicated at all administrative levels, from the executive board to the shop floor of research and education. It is a vital task for universities to act as effectively and appropriately as possible when there are suspicions of undesirable conduct.

Universities are responsible for offering a positive work and study environment that enables all members of the academic community to develop their talents. By their very nature, universities are institutions at which people from different backgrounds can meet and cooperate. Anyone affiliated with our universities as a student, employee, or visitor, contributes to mutually respectful treatment, regardless of origin, religious belief, sexual preference, handicap, position, or job. In sum, it is up to all persons within the institution to make an active commitment towards social safety.

Appendix: What are universities doing?

Universities learn from each other by exchanging best practices. Examples include:

- managing a properly functioning system of confidential advisers at different institutional levels;
- increasing the professionalism of confidential advisers, whose work is based on the code of conduct for the national confidential advisers association (Landelijke Vereniging voor Vertrouwenspersonen, LVVV). Institutions make sure that they provide adequate training to these advisers and that they can do a good job;
- requiring confidential advisers to account for their activities in an annual report. They cooperate closely with other university confidential advisers, in local networks of confidential advisers and the network of confidential university advisers (Netwerk Universitaire Vertrouwenspersonen, NUVP), for example;
- carefully discussing confidential advisers' annual reports in the executive board, preferably during a joint session of the board with full attendance of confidential advisers. The annual reports will be distributed at the faculty, institutional or other administrative levels
- conducting periodical research into social safety at the institution to find out whether there is a pattern among the notifications to confidential advisers and the results of employee satisfaction surveys, as well as what measures need to be taken.