

University sex assault policies average C- in analysis by nationwide student group

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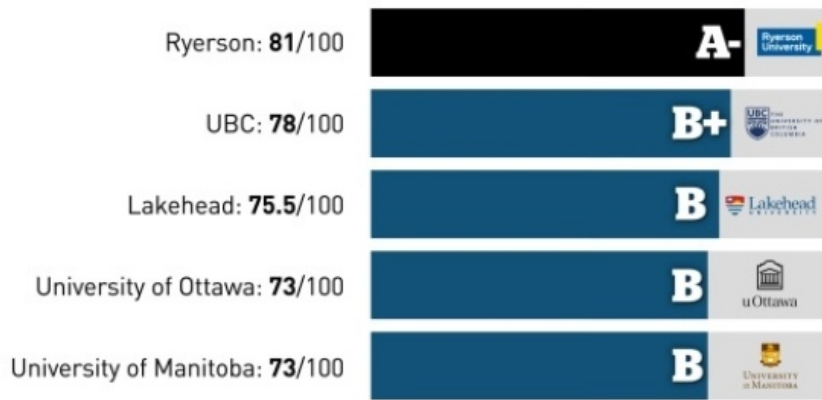


Universities are getting mixed grades when it comes to how they deal with sexual violence on campus, according to the members of Our Turn, a student group that's analyzed more than a dozen provincially mandated sexual assault policies across the country.

The analysis comes after the Ontario government mandated that all post-secondary institutions create standalone sexual violence policies by January 2017. Despite the move, [many people don't think the policies go far enough](#).

- [Former student says university revictimized her](#)

"We found a real gap," said Caitlin Salvino, chair of Our Turn and a former Carleton University student. "There are really no guidelines in Canada as to what should and shouldn't be in sexual violence policies. That's why we started Our Turn."

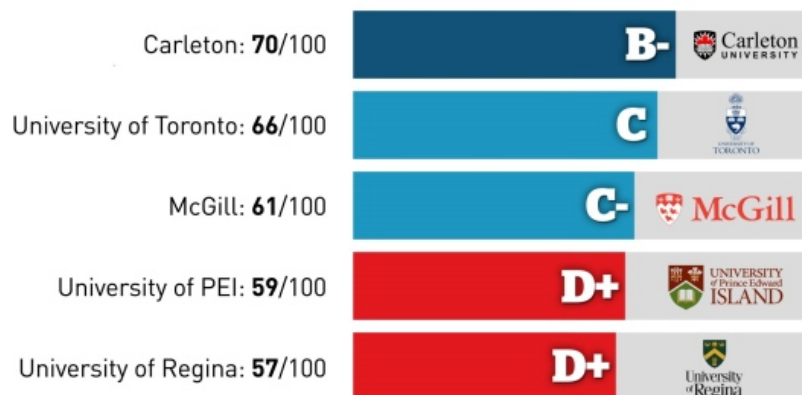


Our Turn has created a report card grading more than a dozen universities' sexual violence policies and an action plan for student unions to support survivors of sexual assault.

- [How these 3 women are helping survivors of campus sex assault](#)





Low grades

Salvino, along with colleagues Kelsey Gilchrist and Jade Cooligan Pang, read more than 60 policies and spoke with dozens of survivors, students and experts to identify at least 45 qualities of good policies, including immunity clauses for survivors who engaged in drug use and underage drinking at the time of their assaults, and clear timelines for investigations.



In the end, they graded 14 sexual violence policies based on whether they included those qualities. The policies averaged a C-.

"[The scores] are really telling us more work needs to be done on these policies," said Salvino. "These are our peers, our friends, who are struggling. After years of asking for support from our government and administration, we've decided [students] will take the lead."

Dalhousie University: 57/100	D+	
University of Winnipeg: 54/100	D	
Memorial: 54/100	D	
Concordia: 52/100	D-	



Source: Our Turn: A national student movement to end campus sexual violence

20 student unions

Aside from the scores, Our Turn unites 20 student unions from eight provinces across Canada, all pledging to support survivors of sexual assault by creating task forces and leading advocacy on campus to improve the policies.



Our Turn's report grades 14 schools' sex assault policies. (Lisa Xing/CBC)

The University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU) is one of the schools that's involved in the movement.

"The fact that [U of T scored] a C shows there's a lot of work to do," said Chimwemwe Alao, vice-president of equity with UTSU. "It's being reinforced by what we're hearing on the ground from students personally."

Wendy Komiotis, executive director of METRAC, a not-for-profit organization working to end violence against women and children, told CBC Toronto schools have to do better.



Wendy Komiotis, executive director of METRAC, says schools should listen to students. (Lisa Xing/CBC)

"We have to listen to students and gauge what they're saying," she said. "We've had a number of students across the country who identify very similar problems."

Terry McQuaid, executive director of personal safety, high risk and sexual violence prevention and support at the University of Toronto, told CBC Toronto the school knows it can "do better" and "we're always open to the feedback."

"We are working hard to try and get it right," said McQuaid, who cited the school has dedicated resources to support people who have experienced sexual violence.

U of T declined to provide number of reports and disclosures of sexual violence from students since its new policy was implemented in January 2017.

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Sex Assault on Campus: Are schools failing students?

CBC Toronto is bringing you stories about survivors of sexual assault and how policies on campuses are working for them. Share your story: Lisa Xing can be reached at lisa.xing@cbc.ca