Frequently Asked Questions

What is the sexual assault climate survey and why am I being asked to take part?
Sexual violence in all its forms on college campuses is a serious national problem, and we are doing whatever is necessary to respond effectively in accordance to not just the law but also with MSU’s core values. We are asking all MSU students to answer a climate survey on sexual assault and sexual misconduct. The results will be used to guide policies to create a safe, respectful environment for learning and working. Our goal is to make MSU as safe as possible by developing programs and services that minimize sexual assault and misconduct, as well as respond to these events when do they do occur. This survey is an important tool for us to assess current programs and to shape policies.

How do I take the survey?
On April 6, every student at MSU will receive an email with the subject line “President Simon asks you to take part in a climate survey for Michigan State University.” There will be a web link within the email that directs you to the online survey. Students will have until April 27 to complete it. This survey includes sections that ask about your knowledge and beliefs related to sexual misconduct, perceptions related to social situations, your knowledge of resources available at your college. This survey also asks about your personal experience with sexual misconduct, such as harassment, sexual assault and other forms of violence.

Who is administering the survey?
The survey is sponsored by MSU in collaboration with the Association of American Universities. Westat, a private research organization, is administering the survey and will be assisting in the analysis of the data.

Are students compensated for taking the survey?
Incentives will be offered to students in one of two ways. Some students were randomly selected to be entered into a sweepstakes for $500 if they visit the survey website. Other students were randomly selected to be offered a $5 Amazon gift card for completing the survey.

What will MSU do with the results?
The results will be used to better understand the climate at MSU, the extent of sexual assault and misconduct among students and the use of programs and services currently being offered. This information will be used to make recommendations for changes to the policies and procedures related to preventing and handling sexual assault and misconduct at MSU.

Why are you asking about these sensitive topics?
Our goal is to foster a safe and supportive environment where students can flourish, both academically and personally. In order to understand the climate at MSU, we need to ask direct questions about topics that some may find sensitive. It is only by directly collecting this information from you will we be able to prevent negative experiences and effectively respond when they do happen.

Why is the language on the survey so explicit?
Some of the language used in this survey is explicit and some people may find it uncomfortable, but it is important that we ask the questions in this way so that you are clear what we mean. Information on how to get help, if you need it, appears on the bottom of each page and at the end of the survey.
Isn’t this survey only for women?
No, this survey is for everyone, regardless of gender identity or experiences. The survey will be used to shape policies that affect everyone on campus, so it is very important that you provide your experiences and viewpoint.

I’ve never experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct, so why should I take part?
If only victims of sexual assault and sexual misconduct participate in the survey, we will have a very lopsided view of your campus. To get a complete picture of your college, we need to hear from as many students as possible.

How long will the survey take?
This survey should take most people about 20 minutes to complete. It may take up to 30 minutes for some individuals.

Am I required to participate?
You do NOT have to participate in this survey, and if you do participate, you may skip any question you are not comfortable answering and may exit the survey at any time.

Will my answers be confidential?
When you complete the survey the link with your name, email and IP address will be broken so that no one will be able to connect these with your survey answers. The results will be presented in summary form so no individual can be identified. However, if we learn about child abuse or about a threat of harm to yourself or others, we are obligated to report it to the authorities.

I still have questions.
If you have any questions about this study please call the Help Desk at 1-855-497-4787. If you have questions about your rights and welfare as a research participant, please call the Westat Human Subjects Protections office at 1-888-920-7631. Please leave a message with your full name, the name of the research study that you are calling about (the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct), and a phone number beginning with the area code. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.