

# FAQ for students participating in MIT's 2019 sexual misconduct survey

## **Why am I being asked to complete this survey?**

MIT is following up on its 2014 Campus Attitudes on Sexual Assault Survey (CASA) by participating in the Association of American Universities (AAU) 2019 Campus Climate Survey for undergraduate and graduate students. The results of the 2014 survey provided MIT with critical information about how sexual misconduct affects the MIT student community, and helped us develop data-driven education and prevention programs and policies.

The survey MIT is inviting students to complete in April 2019 is an important tool that will assist the Institute in measuring the progress made to combat sexual misconduct in the five years since the first survey; identify and respond to new issues the AAU survey may uncover; and put MIT's results into the context of national AAU aggregate data.

## **Who developed the 2019 survey?**

Westat, a social science research firm, was retained by AAU to lead the development of the survey questions and conduct the survey. The design team for the questions included representatives from participating schools and individuals with relevant expertise across the nation. Students at participating schools -- including MIT -- gave feedback on the survey questions, and cognitive interviews were conducted by Westat with individual students.

## **Who is eligible to participate in the survey?**

All current, regularly registered MIT students over 18 years of age are invited to participate in this survey. In order for someone to participate, a student must receive an email invitation to complete the survey, and must click on the unique link included in the email invitation in order to access the survey. The links will lead to a survey hosted by Westat.

## **Am I required to participate? How long will the survey take if I participate?**

You do NOT have to participate in this survey. If you do choose to participate, you may skip any question you are not comfortable answering and may exit the survey at any time. This survey should take most people approximately 20 minutes to complete. It may take up to 30 minutes for some individuals depending on their responses. The survey will be available to MIT students from April 2, 2019 to May 1, 2019.

## **What will happen if I don't participate?**

There are no consequences if you choose not to participate in the survey. Information on who completed the survey (and who did not) will not be available to Westat or MIT.

## **What are the incentives?**

In addition to helping MIT better understand how sexual misconduct affects the MIT student community and measuring the progress made to combat sexual misconduct, a small monetary incentive is provided to all students who complete the survey, in the form of a \$10 Amazon.com gift code, which must be redeemed by June 1, 2019. Students who would prefer to anonymously donate \$10 instead of redeeming their \$10 Amazon.com code will see instructions at the end of the survey for how to exchange it and how to select where to direct their donation.

## **What kinds of questions are in the survey?**

This survey includes sections that ask about your knowledge and beliefs about social situations, perceptions related to sexual misconduct on campus, and your knowledge of resources available at MIT. The survey also asks about your personal experience with sexual misconduct, such as harassment, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual violence.

## **Why are you asking about these sensitive topics? Why is the language on the survey so explicit?**

In order to better understand sexual misconduct on campus, the survey needs to ask direct questions about topics that some may find sensitive. By directly collecting this information from students, MIT can more effectively help to prevent negative experiences and respond when they do happen.

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. Support resources with information on how to get help, if you need it, appears on each page and at the end of the survey.

### **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 the student experience at MIT. To get a better understanding of what is happening in our community, we need to hear from as many students as possible.

### **If I answer that I experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct on the survey, does that mean I reported it to MIT?**

Given the anonymous and confidential nature of the survey, your responses will not be used as a means to report to MIT instances of sexual misconduct, such as harassment, sexual assault, and other forms of violence, that may have occurred while you are a student at MIT. MIT encourages individuals to seek assistance for incidents involving sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, or stalking. To get help while in the survey, please click on Support Resources.

### **Why are you asking me about my race and ethnicity, and my citizenship?**

We are asking these questions so that we can describe the sample of students who completed the survey, and also so that we can describe how climate and actual experiences differ by particular self-reported identities. This will help MIT target resources to those that need it the most.

### **Do I have to answer all the questions? If I skip a question can I go back to it later?**

You do not have to answer all the questions on the survey. You may navigate through the survey items using the "previous" and "next" buttons on the survey pages. Even if you choose not to answer every question, we encourage you to go through all of the items in the survey and click "submit" at the end of the survey so that the responses you do provide can be recorded.

### **If I close the browser will my answers be saved? Can I go back to the survey later to complete it?**

Answers are saved by clicking the navigation buttons on the bottom of each screen (previous, next, and save). You do not have to click "save" on each screen, as long as you navigate to the next question by clicking "next". When you click one of these buttons, the answers on the current screen will be saved and you can close the browser and come back to the survey later to complete it.

However, if you close the browser without clicking one of those buttons on the current screen, your answer on the current screen will not be saved. You may return and complete the survey at any time before the survey closes.

### **Will my identity be connected to my response? Will my answers be confidential?**

No identifying information about an individual or a particular group will be connected by Westat to your survey responses. The data file will only have responses to questions students choose to answer. Unique links with embedded user PINs will be emailed to MIT students who are eligible to participate in the survey, and there is no connection between the links and your survey response. The unique link allows respondents to complete a portion of the survey, exit the survey, and return to complete the rest at a later time, as long as it is within the data collection period between April 2, 2019 – May 1, 2019.

The results will be presented in summary form so no individual can be identified. There is a circumstance described in the informed consent wherein MIT would be obligated to report to the authorities, and that is if you disclose information about child abuse or about a threat of harm to yourself or others. In that case, we are obligated to report it to the authorities. Please note the survey does not have open-text questions that prompt students to describe their experiences. The open-text boxes on the survey are "other, please specify" items on multiple choice questions and have a limit on the number of characters respondents may enter.

### **When can I see the results of this study?**

MIT will receive a report of the results in September 2019. MIT will then make the results available to our community later in the Fall 2019 semester on the Chancellor's web site, <http://chancellor.mit.edu/aasurvey>.

**I still have questions.**

If you have any questions about the study while the survey is live, you can call the Westat Help Desk at 855-793-5324.

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chairman of the Committee on the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects, M.I.T., Room E25-143B, 77 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139, phone 1-617-253-6787.

If you have questions for the Chancellor about Sexual Assault Education & Prevention as one of her priorities, please contact [chancellor-office@mit.edu](mailto:chancellor-office@mit.edu).