Office of
Human Rights and
Conflict Management

Annual Report
2024-2025

If you require this document in an alternate format, please contact the Office of Human Rights and Conflict Management via email at human.rights@umanitoba.ca or phone at 204-474-6348.

OHRCM Land Acknowledgement

The Office of Human Rights and Conflict Management's offices are located on the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Dene and Inuit, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We recognize the sovereignty of the original people of these territories. The water that we drink comes from Treaty 3 and the hydroelectricity fueling the spaces we inhabit is sourced from Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and we commit to working proactively to mitigate current and ongoing harms and to enhance equity for these and other communities on our campuses.

We are constantly working to better understand the ongoing impact of colonization and systemic racism and our roles in addressing those impacts and disrupting that system.

We dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities, recognizing our commitments and responsibilities as set out in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girl's Calls to Justice.

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OHRCM - Overview & Services

Guiding Principles

Vision

The work of the Office of Human Rights and Conflict Management (OHRCM) is guided by the vision of a university community that values diversity, and where equity is part of the culture of every learning and working environment. We envision a University of Manitoba (UM) community where everyone is working together to uphold human rights and dignity for all.

Mission

The OHRCM works collaboratively with UM faculties, administrative offices, student services and the community to promote a respectful working and learning environment in which all individuals are treated equitably and are free from discrimination and harassment based on the protected grounds outlined in *The Human Rights Code (Manitoba)*.

Mandate

The OHRCM works to address and prevent discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence at the UM by promoting, supporting, and administering the UM's *Respectful Work and Learning Environment (RWLE) Policy*, *Sexual Violence Policy*, and the *Disclosures and Complaints Procedure (Procedure)*.

The office is a confidential and private space for individuals to discuss their concerns, seek advice and assistance on human rights related matters, and access the various complaint resolution processes, including consultation, mediation, conciliation, one-on-one conflict coaching, and formal complaint investigation.

Policies and Procedure

OHRCM policies are regularly reviewed and updated to align with UM governance processes and applicable legislation. In the Fall of 2024, the Sexual Violence Policy was reviewed in consultation with UM community members. Reviews of the RWLE Policy and Procedure will take place in 2025-2026.

Team

In 2024-2025, the OHRCM consisted of six full-time staff and two part-time student staff:

- Human Rights and Conflict Management Officer (unit lead)
- Indigenous Rights Specialist
- Human Rights and Conflict Management Advisor (3 positions, one additional advisor position was added in 2024-2025)

- Intake Officer
- Student Educator (2 part-time positions)

Services

The OHRCM provides a range of options to help students, faculty, staff, and the community address concerns relating to human rights, harassment, sexual violence, and conflict management.

When an individual comes forward with a concern regarding harassment, discrimination, sexual violence or conflict, staff at the OHRCM work collaboratively with them to determine the best course of action. Formal and informal resolution options are discussed, depending on the type and severity of the incident and the individual's wishes. Our approach is person-centred and trauma-informed. Our process balances centering the person's goals and wishes, protecting privacy and confidentiality within the limits of the law, and complying with the UM's obligation to investigate and take action when there is a risk to the individual and/or the community.[1] Depending on the situation, the OHRCM may also work with individuals who would like to bring forward a complaint as a group.

The OHRCM also supports institutional work to identify and remove barriers to equity by advising on policy and compliance, participating in key community activities such as working groups and committees, and providing education across the UM community.

Advisory Services

For individuals, the first step is often a confidential intake consultation during which key information is gathered and options are explored. The OHRCM staff member will meet with them in person, online, or by phone as many times as needed to gather information on the nature of the complaint, and to advise on the process, applicable policies, and resolution options available. The staff member may also consult with other UM offices, with the consent of the individual, and/or make a referral to other services within and/or outside the UM.

In many cases, inquiries are resolved when the individual receives information about their rights and options. While most case files stay as advisory, others develop into more specific categories explained below.

Informal Resolution Services

The OHRCM provides a variety of informal resolution options to address conflict, harassment, sexual violence and human rights related concerns, where appropriate. Staff at the OHRCM facilitate resolution of informal complaints through conflict coaching, restorative processes, conciliation, mediation and/or education on the obligations and expectations under the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies. Informal/alternative

[1] The OHRCM Process Flowchart outlines both informal and informal processes.

resolution can also take the form of clarifying and educating individuals about the relevant policies and procedures and/or helping them communicate with the parties/UM offices involved to reach a satisfactory resolution.

When a matter cannot be resolved informally, or if the behaviour continues, the individual has the option of proceeding to a formal complaint. The individual is not obligated to resolve their concerns informally and has the right to proceed with the filing of a formal complaint at any point in the process.

Formal Complaint and Investigation Process

Under the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies and the Procedure, any person who believes that they have been subjected to harassment, discrimination, or sexual violence in the course of UM-related employment, study, training, or activities may submit a formal complaint requesting that the matter be investigated.

All formal complaints should be submitted to the OHRCM in writing, ideally as close to the alleged incident as feasible (although it is understood that this may not always be possible). Upon submission, formal complaints are usually assessed by the Human Rights and Conflict Management Officer to determine applicability under the policies and Procedure and whether or not the matter should proceed to an investigation. Occasionally, some of these preliminary assessments may be completed by an individual external to the UM, depending on the matter and OHRCM workload.

While it is possible that some formal complaints may be investigated internally, most formal complaints that proceed to an investigation are handled by independent, third-party investigators external to the UM. The OHRCM requires that all external investigators have relevant investigation experience as well as specific training in trauma-informed investigation practices. Investigators must also abide by the OHRCM's Investigator Guidelines as well as UM policies and procedures, including the *Conflict of Interest Policy*.

Consultations

Consultations are meetings with members of the UM community to discuss conflict resolution options and the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies, including their interpretation, wording, and options for addressing matters. Consultations are generally peer-to-peer. For example, a staff member may call the office for policy advice or guidance with handling certain situations within their department or unit. Consultations are stand-alone as opposed to conversations that are related to an ongoing file.

Conflict Management Services

Conflict can be difficult to navigate, and the OHRCM strives to meet people where they are at and provide space for individuals to discuss their experiences in a safe and confidential environment.

Conflict management is a voluntary, participant-driven, and cooperative process for addressing and resolving disputes between individuals and within small groups. Conflict

management services are provided in cases where members of the UM community request assistance with interpersonal conflict or challenging dynamics, including difficulty communicating needs, boundaries, and feedback.

Conflict management is facilitated by OHRCM staff and may take the form of conflict coaching, conciliation, mediation, facilitated group dialogue, or restorative processes.[2]

These options often allow for mutually desirable outcomes for participants and can de-escalate conflicts and help foster better relationships. Most of the conflict management strategies, with the exception of conflict coaching, involve all parties in a conflict. When addressing a matter through conflict coaching, however, an individual will meet one-on-one with a trained coach (OHRCM staff) to help improve their ability to manage interpersonal conflicts.

Our Commitments

Commitment to Reconciliation

The OHRCM is committed to the continued work of reconciliation with Indigenous people and ensuring UM Indigenous community members are appropriately supported. The Indigenous Rights Specialist role within the OHRCM aims to build connections with the UM Indigenous community, address systemic challenges and patterns, and provide appropriate supports and referrals when needed. The OHRCM Fort Garry Campus office (201 Allen Building) is also a smudge-friendly space.

Compliance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

The Human Rights and Conflict Management Officer, along with the Associate Vice-President (Human Resources), co-chair the UM's AMA Steering Committee, which is tasked with ensuring that the UM is meeting its obligations under the AMA.

In 2024-2025, the AMA Information and Communication Standard was implemented by the UM. This project was a critical initiative aimed at enhancing accessibility by removing barriers in digital, print, and technological interactions. Work completed on this standard was a collective effort and included policy updates, improving processes, mandatory training, and increasing the accessibility of web content and applications.

The OHRCM is also represented on the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network (MBAAN), an ad hoc advisory group to the Manitoba Accessibility Office of the Province of Manitoba. This group shares expertise in creating accessibility within and across Manitoba organizations, and is comprised of representatives from government agencies, post-secondary institutions, the United Way, Manitoba's Crown corporations, and community disability organizations.

[2] Visit the OHRCM website for a full listing of conflict management options and definitions.

2024-2025 Statistics

The OHRCM's data collection process follows the UM's best practices, guidelines, and related standards. The data collection process includes, but is not limited to, gathering and reviewing the number of activities performed by the OHRCM each year. Strong and accurate data collection practices are critical to ensuring accountability to the UM community, quality of services, and efficacy of the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies and Procedure.

OHRCM Scope of Work and Major Activities

Figure 1 shows the range of OHRCM activities on UM campuses and the proportion of each activity category within the overall scope of work. During this fiscal year (from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025), advisory services represented most of the OHRCM's client interactions, while education and informal resolution services represented another significant portion of the work.

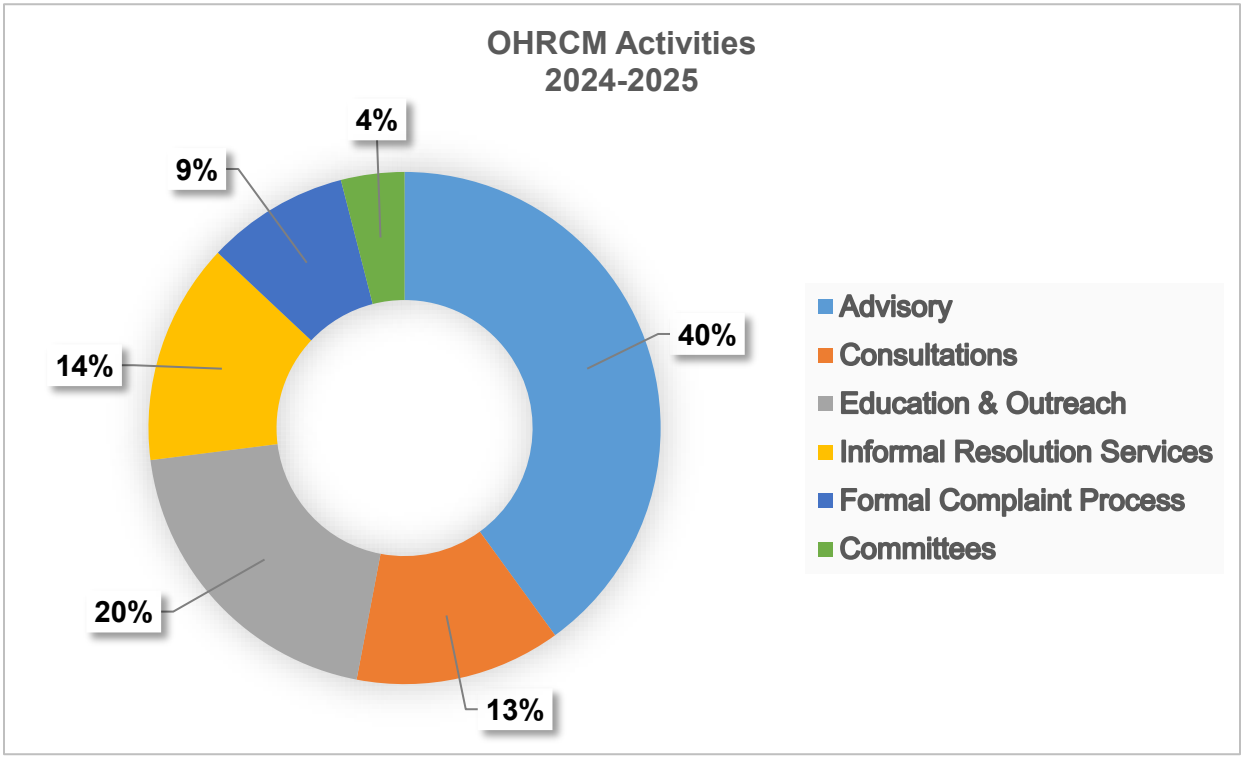

Figure 1: OHRCM Activities, 2024-2025

Informal Resolution Processes and Formal Complaints

The OHRCM is a confidential office and staff strive to ensure it is a safe space where, as much as possible, its processes are driven by the individual(s) attending the OHRCM for support.

Figure 2 depicts the number of informal resolution processes and formal complaints processed by the OHRCM each fiscal year from 2022 to 2025. The data shows that the numbers have remained consistent for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

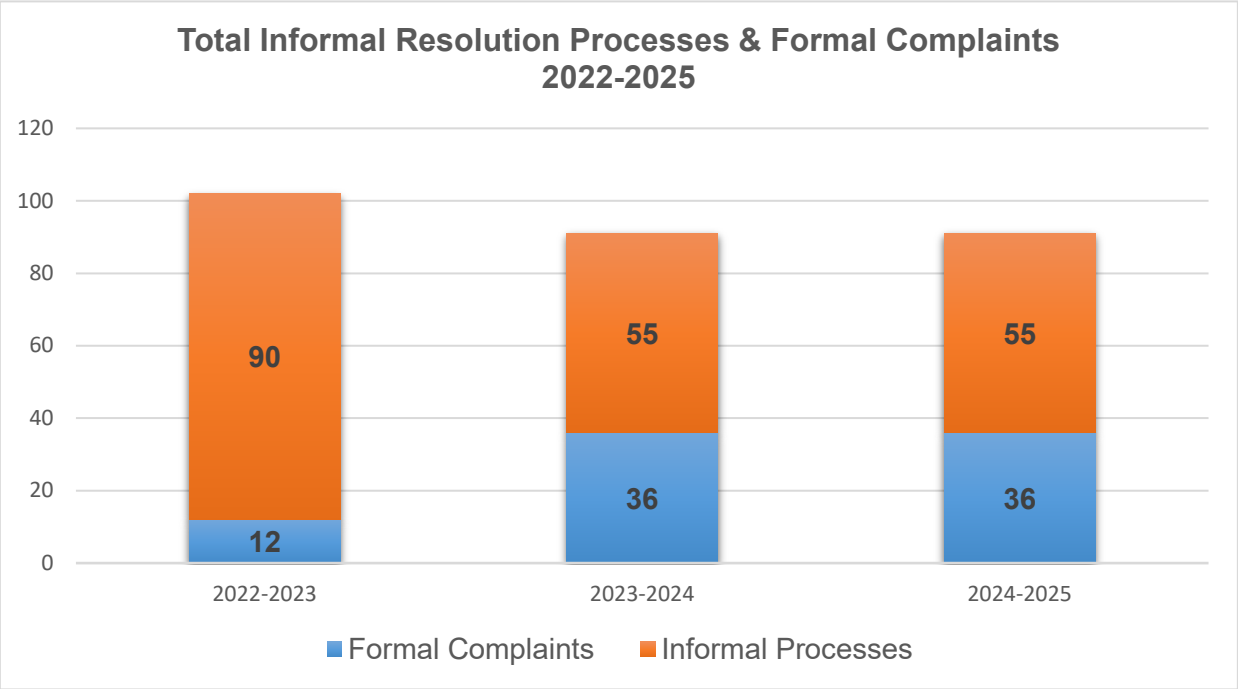

Figure 2: Total Informal Review Processes & Formal Complaints, 2022-2025

Complaints of Prohibited Conduct

Any person, whether they are a member of the UM community or not, may contact the OHRCM to raise a concern regarding discrimination, harassment or sexual violence or to make a formal complaint. These forms of behaviour are considered prohibited conduct under the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies. In order for formal complaints to move forward they must fall within the jurisdiction of the OHRCM.

Figure 3 shows the number of complaints processed regarding all matters of prohibited conduct under the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies from 2022 to 2025. Over the course of 2024-2025, 44 of the 91 complaints reported to the OHRCM were allegations of prohibited conduct under the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies. Most of the complaints of prohibited conduct received by the OHRCM involved human rights-based

harassment and discrimination, followed by multiple types of prohibited conduct, personal harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

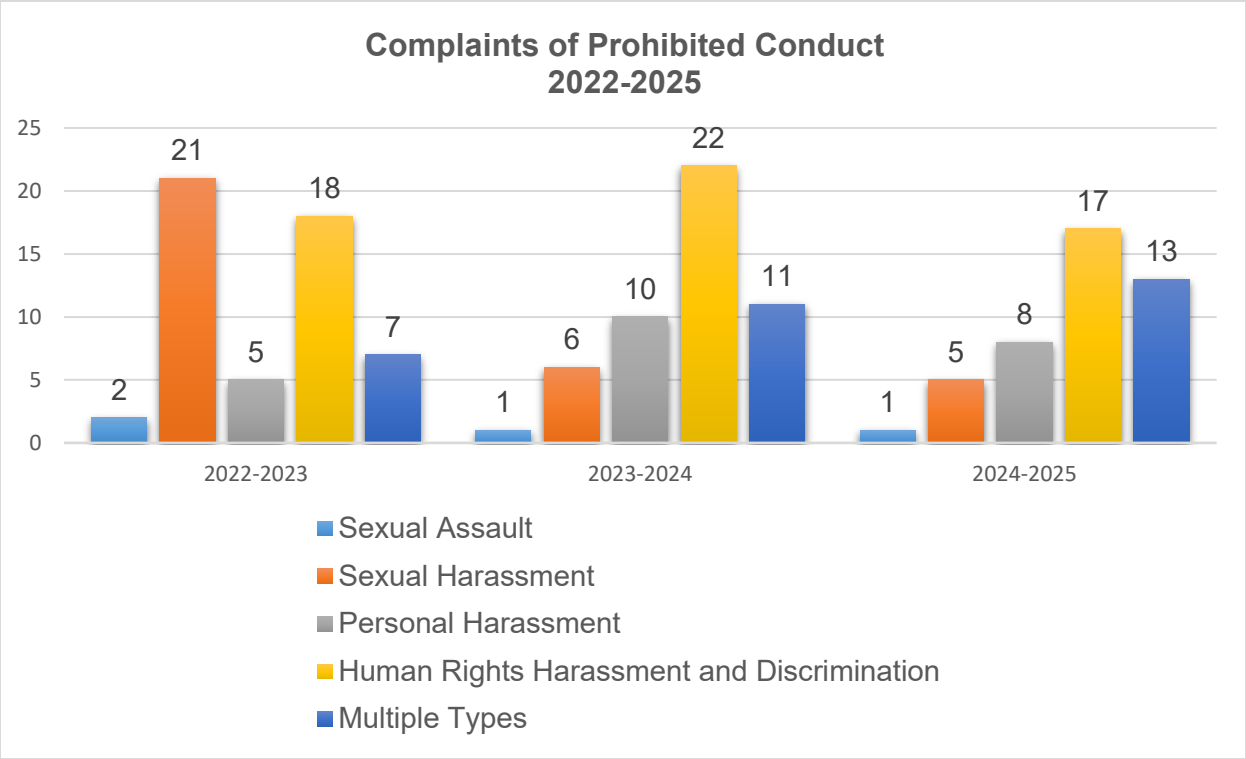

Figure 3: Complaints of Prohibited Conduct, 2022-2025

Formal Complaints

Figures 4 and 5 show the total number of formal complaints processed by the OHRCM in the period spanning 2022-2025. During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, 36 of the 44 complaints of prohibited conduct were formal complaints.

The breakdown of formal complaints processed for 2024-2025 is as follows: 14 complaints were assessed not to proceed to an investigation, two complaints were not pursued, and 20 complaints proceeded to an external investigation (note that nine of these complaints were carried forward from the previous year). Of the 20 formal complaints that proceeded to an investigation, a breach of the RWLE and/or Sexual Violence policies was found in nine complaints, and no breach was found in three complaints. At the time of reporting, decisions had not been rendered in eight complaints.

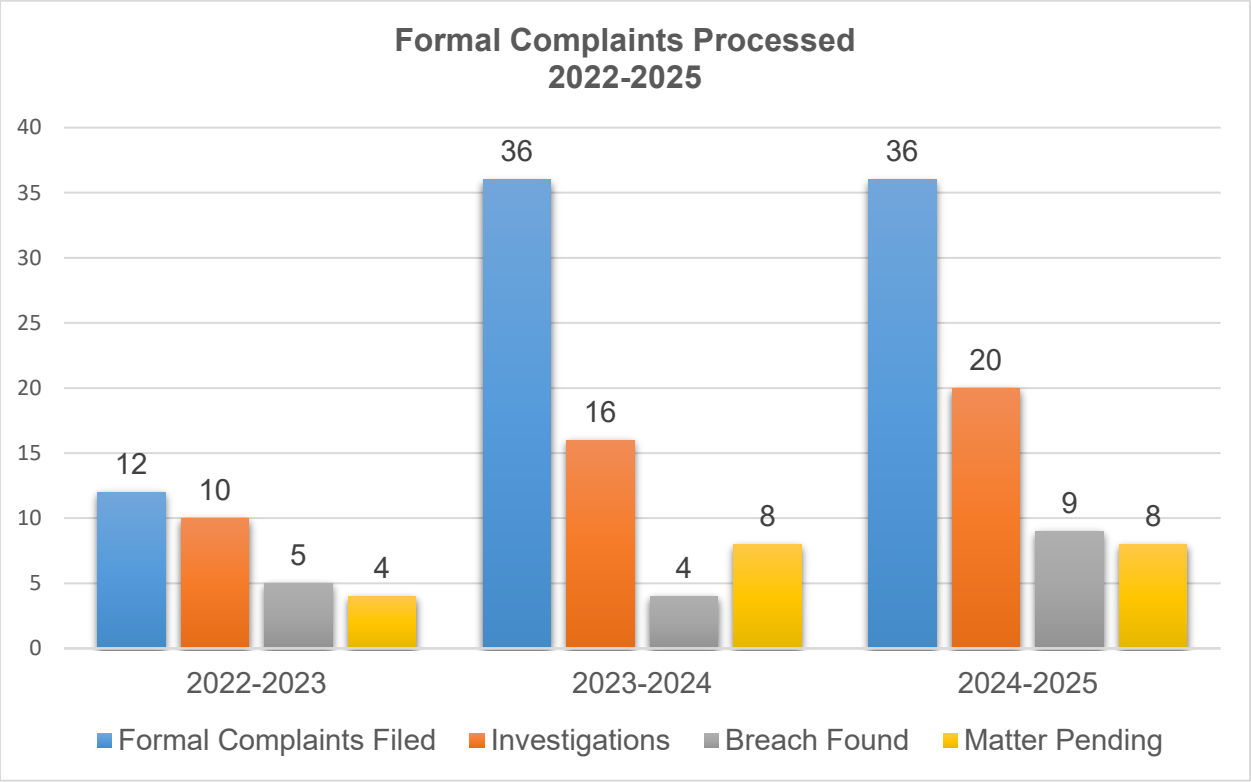

Figure 4: Formal Complaints Processed, 2022-2025

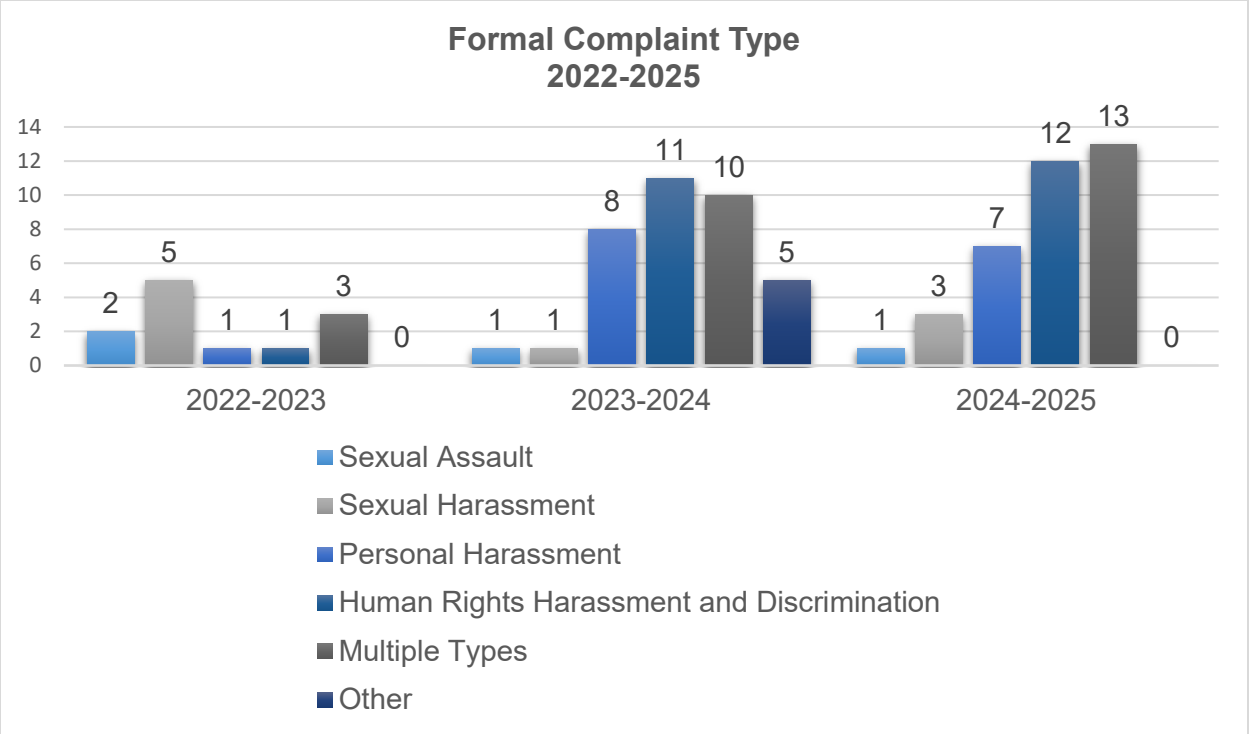

Figure 5: Formal Complaint Type, 2022-2025

Formal complaints under investigation are normally completed within 90 working days of the complaint being assigned to an investigator. In some cases, the investigator may apply to the OHRCM for an extension of up to 30 working days. An investigator may make multiple applications for extensions, but extensions may only be granted if reasonable in the circumstances and at a maximum of 30 working days at a time. The OHRCM informs the complainant and respondent in writing of any extensions granted.

The OHRCM works to maintain an impartial and trauma-informed approach in addressing all matters. As a result, the majority of the formal investigations are completed by external investigators. In 2024-2025, all formal complaints that proceeded to an investigation were conducted by external investigators.

In 2024-2025 staff and students represented the majority of complainants for formal complaints and faculty and staff represented the majority of respondents. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of complainant and respondent roles.

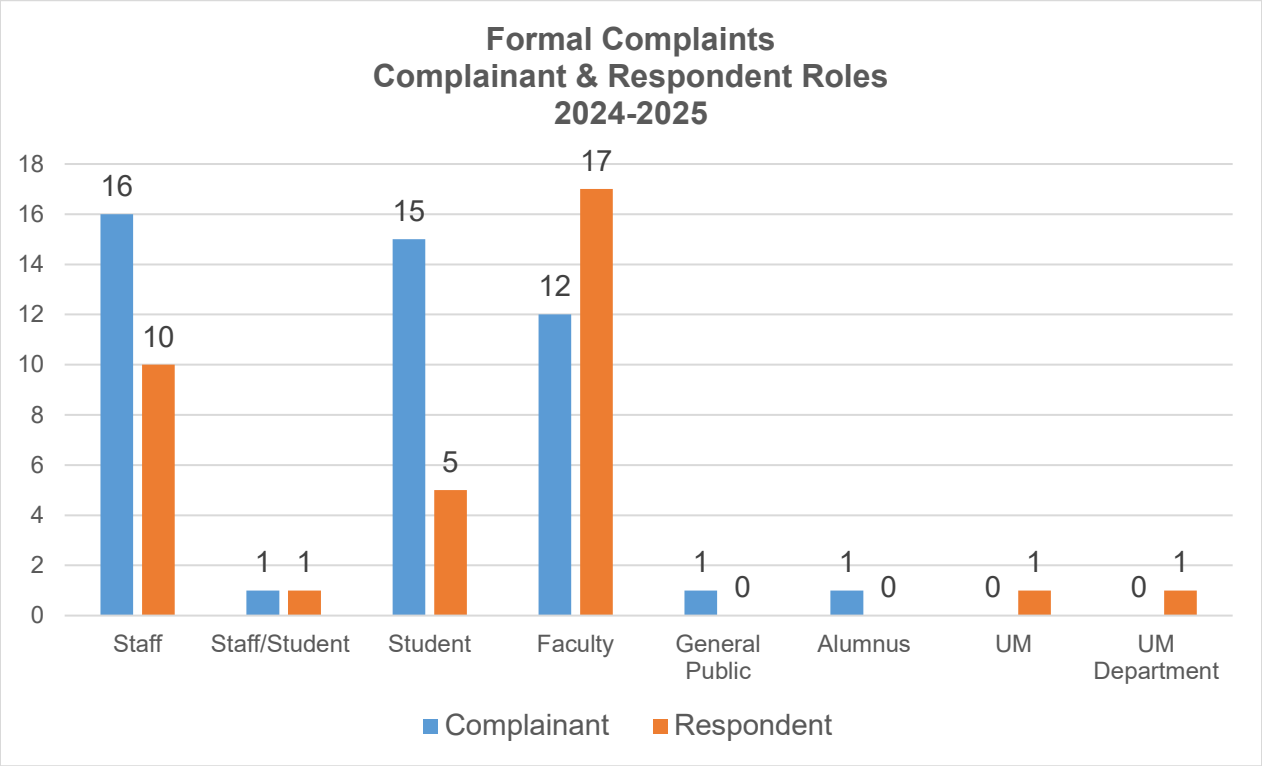

Figure 6: Formal Complaints, Complainant & Respondent Roles, 2024-2025

Informal Resolution Processes

Figure 7 shows the number of allegations of prohibited conduct under the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies reported to the OHRCM that were addressed through an informal resolution process. During 2024-2025, eight of the 44 complaints of prohibited conduct under the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies reported to the OHRCM were addressed using an informal resolution process.

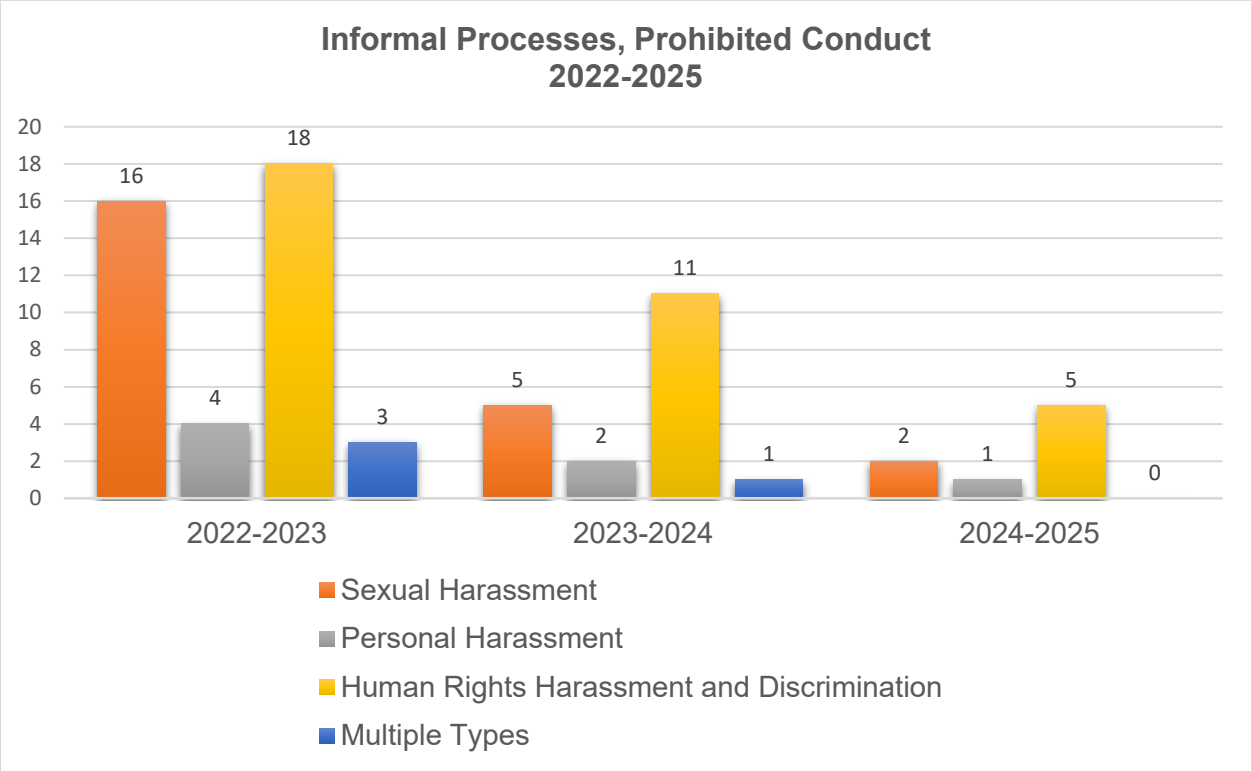

Figure 7: Informal Processes, Complaints of Prohibited Conduct, 2022-2025

The OHRCM continues to provide information to both complainants and respondents regarding the opportunities and resources available to facilitate informal resolution of an alleged policy breach.

The OHRCM also collects data on the particular roles of complainants and respondents (i.e., student, staff, faculty, etc.) for informal resolution process files. Figure 8 shows the breakdown of complainant and respondent roles for informal resolution processes in 2024-2025.

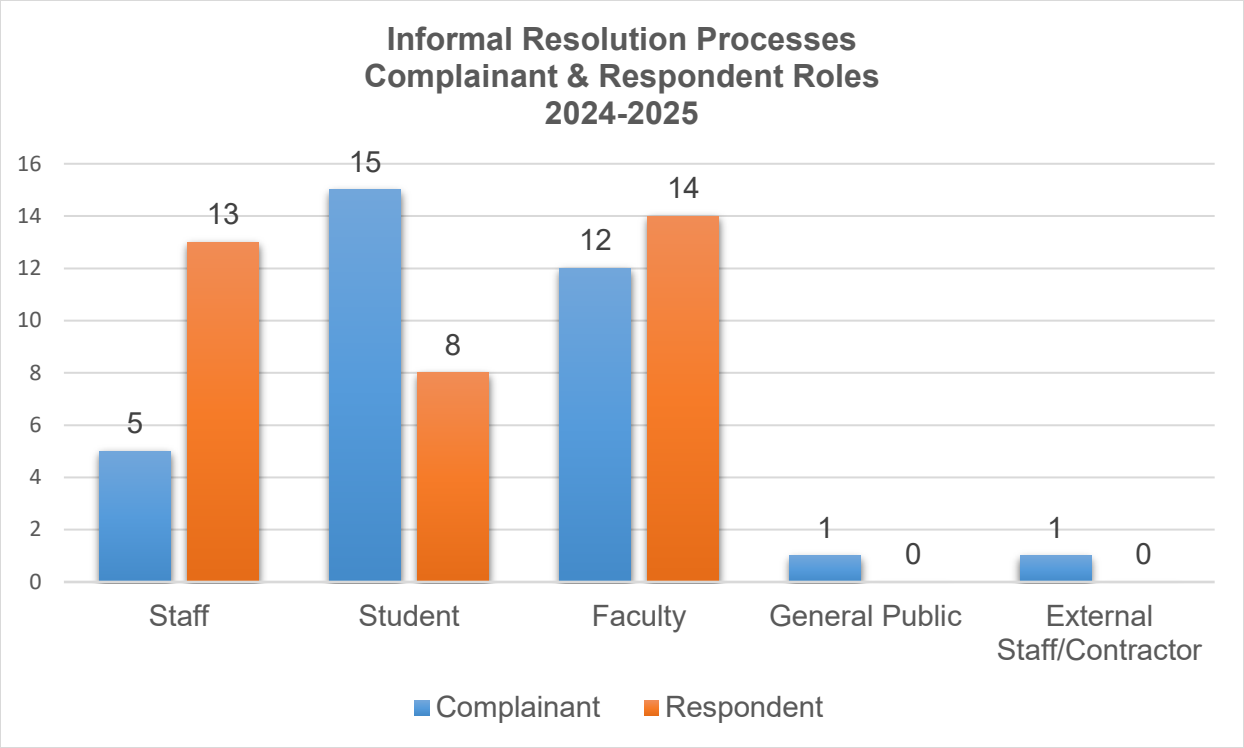

Figure 8: Informal Resolution Processes, Complainant & Respondent Roles, 2024-2025

Conflict Management Services

The OHRCM continues to provide the UM with a wide range of conflict management options to address matters that may not be directly related to the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies. In 2024-2025, the OHRCM conducted mediations, one-on-one coaching, and varied informal resolution processes including restorative justice processes to resolve and/or develop strategies to resolve conflict situations. Figure 9 displays the number of conflict management services performed during the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

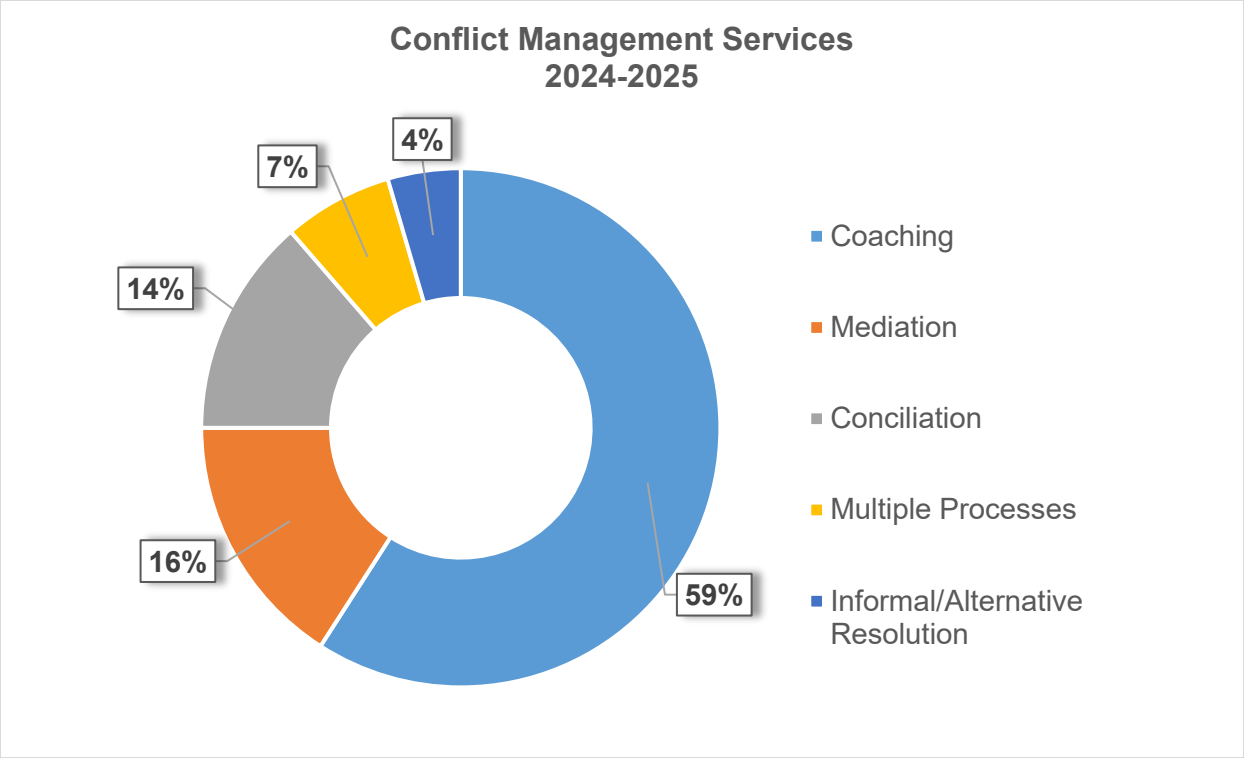

Figure 8: Conflict Management Services, 2024-2025

Informal resolution may include, but is not limited to, mediation or facilitated conversations, conflict coaching, apologies, impact statements or letters, expectation letters or agreements, or restorative justice processes.

Education, Outreach and Collaboration

Education is a key element in promoting a safe and inclusive space for UM community members. The OHRCM provides a variety of educational activities, engaging students, faculty, staff, and community members in learning about human rights and conflict management strategies, sometimes in collaboration with other units or departments as discussed below.

Activities in 2024-2025

The OHRCM delivered educational presentations focused on the RWLE Policy, the Sexual Violence Policy, accessibility legislation and conflict management strategies. These presentations were delivered as part of student and staff orientations, tabling events, as well as interactive workshops and unit-specific presentations that engage members of the UM community in thinking and learning about their rights and responsibilities under the RWLE/Sexual Violence policies. These sessions also provide opportunities to build knowledge and skills around conflict resolution and respectful

communication. Most of this training is conducted by OHRCM staff. Increasingly, training is delivered in collaboration with other units and departments.[3]

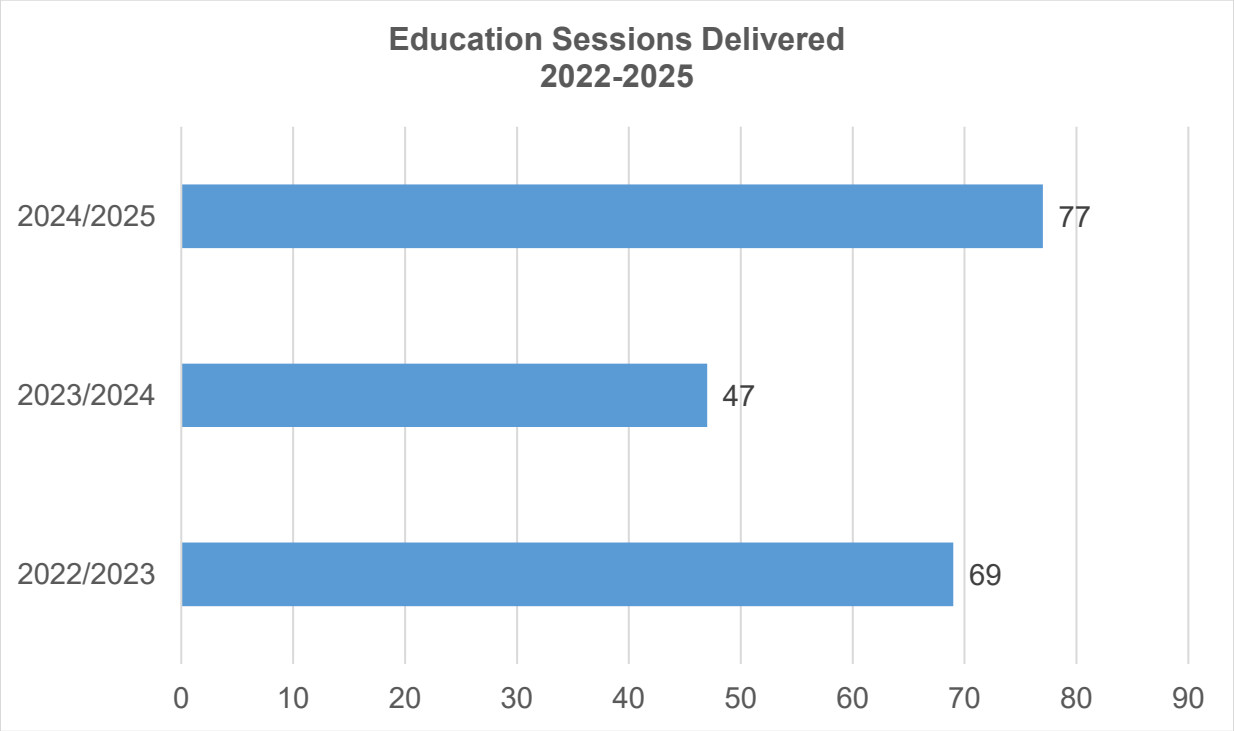

Figure 9: Education Sessions Delivered, 2022-2025

In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the OHRCM delivered a total of 77 different educational sessions to nearly 3000 individuals within the UM community, including students, faculty, and staff.

Examples of presentations include standard 15 to 30-minute-long orientations for students, faculty, and staff, as well as customized workshops and seminars of one to three hours designed to meet specific learning needs and objectives.

Fellows in Equity, Anti-Oppression and Social Justice

In 2024, the OHRCM partnered with the Office of Equity Transformation (OET) by hosting a six-month fellowship placement. The goals of the fellowship, which is facilitated by the OET and includes a variety of educational opportunities, are to:

[3] Collaborators include Learning and Organizational Development, Human Resources, Student Advocacy, Student Accessibility Services, the Office of Equity Transformation, the Office of Equity, Access and Participation at the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, the Office of Professionalism at the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning and various faculties and colleges across the UM.

- Develop individual and collective understanding of equity and anti-oppression frameworks.
- Apply equity and anti-oppression frameworks and contribute to institutional action to reduce systemic inequities and advance anti-oppression and social justice at the UM.
- Build networks for action that challenge hierarchies rooted in traditional power relations.
- Create capacity at UM and Manitoba for advancing equity, anti-oppression and social justice through mentorship and training of student leaders in the fields of equity, anti-oppression and social justice.
- Commit to experiential and work-integrated learning across key areas related to anti-ableism, anti-racism, and social justice, as well as equity, diversity, and inclusion.

During the placement, the fellow completed work on OHRCM process documents and expanded the office's list of referrals to include culturally sensitive supports and resources.

Student Educator Program

The OHRCM continues to be committed to building relationships with diverse groups on UM's campuses to ensure we are accessible, equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive in our outreach and education delivery.

Following the success of previous Student Educator positions and their recommendations to continue with a peer-to-peer approach to engage and disseminate information regarding OHRCM services and policies, the OHRCM rehired two UM undergraduate students for the Student Educator positions in September 2024. Their key objectives were to:

- Engage with the UM student community (including student groups and organizations on all UM campuses) and provide education on the RWLE and Sexual Violence policies and the Procedure; and
- Assist the OHRCM in identifying gaps or barriers in education delivery to students and work together to develop solutions from a student-focused and equity lens.

The Student Educators focused on in-person and online presentations, policy review, outreach events, various research projects, and office tasks such as records management. In addition to this, the Student Educators conducted focus groups related to the Sexual Violence Policy review in Fall 2024.

Committee Work

OHRCM staff were involved on the following committees during the 2024-2025 reporting year:

- Accessibility Audit Committee
- Anti-Racism Policy Advisory Committee
- Calendar of Ceremonies
- Co-Chair, AMA Steering Committee
- EDI Centralized Approach Team
- EDI Community of Practice
- Family Friendly University Committee
- Indigenous Connect
- Indigenous Homecoming Planning Committee
- Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network (MBAAN)
- Manitoba Post-Secondary Institute working group on Sexual Violence Matters
- Mental Health First Aid UM Community of Practice
- Path Forward Implementation Committee
- Max Rady College of Medicine Professionalism Sub-committee on Admissions
- RWLE/Sexual Violence Policy Review Committee
- Sexual Assault and Violence Steering Committee (Formerly the Sexual Assault Working Group)
    - Sexual Assault Response Guide Sub-Committee
- University of Manitoba Black Alliance (UMBA)