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## UNIVERSITY OPERATING PROCEDURE

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### **Title:** Vulnerable Adults and Minors, Reporting Abuse, or Neglect or Exploitation of, and Crimes

#### Overview

The University strives to maintain a supportive and safe environment for those who work, study or participate in programs and activities at the University. This includes protecting minors and vulnerable adults

Under Vermont law, certain professionals are legally mandated to report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of minors and vulnerable adults. In addition, to protect optimally the safety of vulnerable adults and minors who are participating in UVM Programs and Activities, the University requires all personnel to report concerns that arise in the context of university programs or activities, regardless of whether they are considered mandated reporters under state law.

UVM personnel who know or suspect that a vulnerable adult or minor is a victim of abuse, exploitation or neglect, action must be taken. Proof that abuse, exploitation or neglect has occurred is not required. Any uncertainty in deciding whether to make a report should be resolved in favor of making a good faith report.

Reports made in good faith are protected by law from civil or criminal liability, and University policy prohibits retaliation or adverse employment action as a result of such reports.

#### Applicability of the Procedure

This Operating Procedure applies to all University of Vermont personnel as defined herein.

#### Definitions

**Abuse:** refers to any action that intentionally causes harm or injures another person. This can refer to physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse, child abuse, or abuse of a vulnerable adult. In Vermont, abuse of a vulnerable adult is further defined in 33 V.S.A. § 6902(1) and of a minor in [33 V.S.A. § 4912](#).

**Caregiver:** A person, agency, facility, or other organization with responsibility for providing subsistence or medical or other care to an adult who is an elder or has a disability, who has assumed the responsibility voluntarily, by contract, or by an order of the Court; or a person providing care, including medical care, custodial care, personal care, mental health services, rehabilitative services, or any other kind of care provided which is required because of another's age or disability; or a person responsible for the care, custody, or control of a minor.

<u>Child or Minor:</u>	Anyone under the age of 18.
<u>Exploitation:</u>	refers to the act of taking unjust advantage of another person, typically a vulnerable adult or child, for one's own profit or advantage. This can involve various forms, such as using coercion, force, manipulation, or fraud to take someone's property, financial assets, or labor against their will or without their informed consent. In Vermont, exploitation of a vulnerable adult is further defined in 33 V.S.A. § 6902(13) and sexual exploitation of a minor in <a href="#">13 V.S.A. § 2821</a> :
<u>Neglect:</u>	is the failure of a person responsible for another's welfare to provide necessary care, such as food, shelter, medical attention, or supervision, leading to harm or threatened harm to the individual's physical or mental well-being. Neglect may be repeated conduct or a single incident which has resulted in or could be expected to result in physical or psychological harm. In Vermont, neglect of a vulnerable adult is further defined in 33 V.S.A. § 6902(21) and of a child in <a href="#">33 V.S.A. § 4912</a>
<u>Sexual Abuse:</u>	any sexual activity or lewd conduct involving a child or any sexual activity or lewd conduct involving a vulnerable adult who cannot consent due to a disability, age, or fear, or when the individual does not consent to the activity.
<u>UVM Personnel:</u>	includes employees of the University of Vermont, as well as contractors, consultants, temporary employees, and volunteers with responsibilities for academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training, or other programs and activities sponsored by or affiliated with the University.
<u>UVM Program or Activity:</u>	refers to those programs and activities that are (i) held on campus or on off-campus property owned or leased by the University; (ii) in programs offered by third persons with University sponsorship or affiliation; or (iii) while engaged in a University-related activity off-campus.
<u>UVM Reporters:</u>	are individuals with legally required reporting responsibilities as defined in <a href="#">Designation and Responsibilities of UVM Reporters</a> UOP.
<u>Vulnerable Adult:</u>	Any person 18 years of age or older who, due to physical, mental, or developmental disabilities or infirmities of aging, is unable to provide for their own care or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In Vermont, this is further defined in <a href="#">33 V.S.A. § 6902 (34)</a> .

## Procedures

The University requires any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a minor or vulnerable adult participating in a UVM Program or Activity is currently being abused or neglected, or has otherwise been abused or neglected while participating in a UVM Program or Activity to file a report by contacting UVM Police Services at EMERGENCY: 911; Non-emergency: (802) 656-3473.

Individuals in professions that directly provide health care, law enforcement, caregiving, counseling, education, or social services are mandatory reporters under Vermont law and have additional reporting requirements. Under Vermont law, mandatory reporters for vulnerable adults are defined by the [Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living](#) and for minors by the [Department of Children and Families](#). In addition to reporting to UVM Police Services, mandatory reporters must also report to the following:

- APS Abuse Hotline: 1-800-564-1612
- DCF Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-649-5285

It does not matter whether individuals believed to be involved in the crime as perpetrators or victims are members of the University community -- reporting must occur even if no member of the University community appears to be involved.

Responsibility for reporting cannot be transferred or deferred to another individual. While employees may involve a supervisor in the reporting process for support or consultation, each individual remains personally responsible for ensuring that the report is made. Delegating or assuming someone else will make the report does not fulfill this obligation.

## Contacts

Questions concerning the daily operational interpretation of this UOP should be directed to the following:	
Title(s)/Department(s):	Contact Information:
Chief Safety and Compliance Officer	(802) 656-8937 <a href="mailto:safetycompliance@uvm.edu">safetycompliance@uvm.edu</a>
Clery Coordinator	(802) 656-3473
Title IX Coordinator	(802) 656-3368 <a href="mailto:titleix@uvm.edu">titleix@uvm.edu</a>

## Forms/Flowcharts/Diagrams

- None

## Related Documents/Policies

- [Campus Safety and Security: Clery Act](#)
- [Designation and Responsibilities of UVM Reporters](#)
- [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Protecting Minors Policy](#)

## Training/Education

Training is available to all UVM Reporters. While attendance is not required, the University strongly encourages all UVM Reporters to complete training.

<b>Training Topic:</b>	UVM Reporter Training		
<b>Training Audience:</b>	UVM Reporters	<b>Delivered By:</b>	Clery Coordinator, Student Affairs, Title IX Coordinator and General Counsel
<b>Method of Delivery:</b>	In-Person	<b>Frequency:</b>	Annually

## About This Procedure

<b>Responsible Official:</b>	Chief Safety and Compliance Officer	<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Chief Safety and Compliance Officer
<b>Affiliated Policy Number(s):</b>	V. 3.3.2, V. 3.15.1, V. 4.30.1	<b>Effective Date:</b>	August 30, 2016
<b>Revision History:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• December 21, 2012</li><li>• September 26, 2019</li><li>• February 13, 2020</li><li>• May 17, 2020</li><li>• Responsible official officially changed from the Vice President Legal Affairs and General Counsel to the Vice President for Operations and Public Safety (VPOPS) on October 5, 2020. Title of VPOPS changed to Chief Safety and Compliance Officer in July 2022.</li><li>• Merged with Vulnerable Adults, Reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation of, and Crimes UOP October 14, 2025</li></ul>		

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