

## Intimate Image FAQ

### **1. What are intimate images?**

The term “intimate images” includes photos, recordings, social media posts, and AI generated images (“deep fakes”) of a person’s intimate body parts or engaged in sexual activity. Taking and sharing intimate images without consent is considered “sexual exploitation” under University policy. Students and employees who are determined to have engaged in such conduct following an investigation will be sanctioned by the University.

### **2. May students take and share intimate images without violating the Student Conduct Code or Prohibited Discrimination and Retaliation Policy?**

The consensual taking and sharing of intimate images means that the person depicted in the image is aware that their image is being taken/shared, has agreed that their image may be taken/shared, and has agreed that their image may be taken by the person taking the image and shared with the specific people with whom the image is shared. Sharing an intimate image includes showing it to another person, even if the image is not sent to another person electronically (e.g., text, social media). The consensual taking/sharing of intimate images also means that the person depicted in the images was not coerced into sharing their image, meaning that the person voluntarily agreed for their image to be taken/shared without threat or force or other coercive conduct.

### **3. Can all UO students take/share intimate images without violating the Student Conduct Code of other University policy?**

Students over the age of 18 may take and share intimate images with the consent of those depicted in the images. However, it is violation of University policy (1) to take or share intimate images without the consent of the person(s) depicted in the images and (2) to possess or disseminate images of child sexual abuse and child pornography, which includes images of any person under the age of 18. Taking and sharing intimate images without consent is considered sexual exploitation under University policy. It is also a violation of the law to possess or disseminate images of child sexual abuse and child pornography.

### **4. How can I safely share my intimate images?**

There are steps that you can take to share images safely and help to protect yourself against the unwanted dissemination of your intimate images:

- Only share your intimate images with people you know. This will often mean only sharing your intimate images with people you have met and trust.
- If you choose to share your intimate images with someone whom you have never met, you might choose to share images that do not include your face or identifying marks such as tattoos, scars, and birthmarks.

### **5. Should I be able to meet people and share my image without worrying about my image being shared without my permission?**

You have the right to share your intimate image with whomever you choose. And it is not your fault if someone violates your trust and shares your image without your consent. At the same time, there are real and considerable risks to sharing your intimate images with someone you don’t know: the risk that your image will be shared without your consent, the risk of experiencing sextortion, and the accompanying risk to your mental well-being. There are manipulative people who will befriend you online or reach out to you by text message for the sole purpose of obtaining your intimate image and ransoming you, also known as “sextortion.”

## **6. How does sextortion work?**

Sextortion is the practice of extorting money or sexual favors from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity, including disseminating their intimate images. Here is an example: a social media message pops up, someone has reached out to say, “hi,” or there is a text message from a number you don’t recognize, and the person strikes up a conversation with you. Maybe they start by saying something like “Hey, I thought we were meeting for coffee” or “I am returning your message.” These messages seem innocent enough. But they are often the first step towards experiencing sextortion. Once this person has befriended you, they may ask you to share intimate photos with them. Often, a first request to share an intimate image will be made within less than an hour. Those images may be used to extort money or other favors from you by threatening to post your images online or share the images with your family, professors, coworkers, etc.

You are encouraged to not respond to these messages. If you do respond, you are encouraged to not share your name, any identifying information, or your intimate images because there is a high risk that the person who reached out intends harm. If you share an image, they may demand money from you or that you provide additional photos, often increasingly explicit photos. Therefore, if you choose to share an image, you are encouraged to not include your face or identifying marks such as birthmarks or tattoos in the images that you share.

## **7. Does paying a ransom mean that an image won’t be disseminated to others?**

Maybe or maybe not. There are times when the scammer will go away after receiving a payment, maybe \$500 or \$1,000 or more. Other times, payment is followed by demands for additional payment, or additional intimate images, which may or may not bring the sextortion to an end.

## **8. What are the consequences of sextortion?**

The consequences of sextortion are often devastating: feelings of betrayal, shame, depression, and anxiety, even though what happened is not your fault

## **9. Will the University reimburse me for money I pay to a scammer?**

The University has a fund available to students who have experienced sex and gender-based violence. The fund can be used to cover necessary out-of-pocket expenses such as moving costs, medical costs, and other out-of-pocket costs related to their experience. Receipts for goods and services are required to document costs incurred by students. The University cannot, however, reimburse cash paid to scammers.

## **10. How common is sextortion?**

Sextortion is the fastest growing cybercrime according to both the F.B.I. and the Department of Homeland Security. The F.B.I. received more than 13,000 reports of financial sextortion between October 2021 and March 2023, though that number likely represents an undercount. Many who engage in sextortion are outside the United States, and unfortunately, more often than not, they go unpunished.

People all over the country, including UO students, are being tricked into sending naked pictures. Scammers use avatars or (other people’s) attractive photos and manipulation techniques to induce people into sharing their intimate images. And phone numbers are usually spoofed, making it difficult to track down those responsible. Once an image has been shared, demands for payment to forestall its dissemination begin.

**11. What kind of laws exist to protect students from the nonconsensual dissemination of their intimate images?**

You may have heard of “revenge porn” laws, laws that create criminal and/or civil penalties for sharing an intimate partner’s intimate images without consent. Some of those laws have been expanded because as people other than intimate partners engage in the non-consensual sharing of another person’s intimate image. Under Oregon Law, it is a misdemeanor to "disclose an identifiable image" of someone "whose intimate parts are visible or who is engaged in sexual conduct" with the "intent to harass, humiliate or injure."

The crime can be escalated to a felony charge for a second offense. Such laws are helpful in that they may discourage some from engaging in the conduct and they provide recourse. But these laws contemplate that an intimate image has already been disseminated without consent.

Please be aware that if someone from outside the United States is responsible for what happened to you, legal action may prove difficult. But you are still encouraged to report, whether you report to law enforcement, to the University, or both. And you are encouraged to seek the support you need through confidential resources.

**12. What should I do if I find my intimate image online and I did not give permission for it to be taken or shared?**

While it may feel uncomfortable to do so, you are encouraged to retain a record of the image. This may mean that you will need to take a screenshot of the image. Also note where you found the image and if you have information about who may have posted it. Such documentation will be helpful in the event you decide to report what you found, whether to the University or to law enforcement.

You should also contact the site hosting the image and request that it be removed. Follow the below links for instructions about how to request that your intimate image be taken down by:

- [Instagram](#)
- [Meta](#) (Facebook)
- [SnapChat](#)

In addition, the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#) offers a resource, [Take it Down](#), that assigns a unique digital fingerprint called a hash value to nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit images or videos of people under the age of 18. Online platforms can use hash values to detect these images or videos on their services and remove this content. This all happens without the image or video leaving your device or anyone viewing it.

**13. Where can I go for help on campus?**

Students have options, including the option to receive confidential support and the option to report to the University or to law enforcement.

- Care and Advocacy Program (CAP): A Confidential Advocate can provide support and advocacy for students experiencing sex and gender-based violence and harassment, including sexual exploitation. Students should [follow this link](#) to schedule an appointment with an Advocate.
- Student Survivor Legal Services (SSLS): Students may receive free and confidential advice, including information about their legal options and assistance with the University’s formal Student Conduct process. Students should [follow this link](#) to schedule a time to speak with an SSLS attorney.

- Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC): This office investigates allegations of sex and gender-based harassment and violence, including sexual exploitation, by students and employees. Students should [follow this link](#) to submit a report.
- UOPD has a detective who specializes in investigating sex crimes involving students. UOPD can be reached at 541.346.2919.

Students may request supportive measures from CAP and OICRC. Supportive measures will be tailored to an individual's needs and may include academic supportive measures, a No Contact Directive, financial, housing or transportation assistance, counseling services, and assistance with alternate work arrangements, among others. Students **are not** required to participate in a formal Student Conduct process to receive supportive measures. Supportive measures are available regardless of whether the person who harmed you is affiliated with the University.

Please note that the University does not have the authority to investigate people who are not affiliated with the University. However, help is still available. Students are encouraged to contact CAP or SSLS or OICRC or UOPD for non-judgmental help and support.

***14. Is there anything else that I should know?***

The focus of this FAQ is intimate images. However, please note that making audio recordings of another person engaged in a sex act or other sexual activity when there is a reasonable expectation of privacy and without the consent of all involved in the activity is also considered "sexual exploitation" under University policy.