

**Perceptions of Sexuality and Gendered Sexual Roles among
Students at a South African University:
Exploring Heteronormativity on Campus**

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ABSTRACT The aim of this paper is to investigate the extent to which university students are likely to hold heteronormative and normative gendered views. Data was obtained through a quantitative survey. A total of 1214 undergraduate students were interviewed in an urban university in South Africa. Low levels of homophobia were reported, with women being more accepting towards homosexuality. It was found that heteronormative (possible heterosexist) views are at play when asked whether homosexuality should be portrayed positively on campus, which raises questions of heterosexual privilege. While students are generally willing to interact with homosexual students, they have an aversion towards same-sex relationships being given a positive, and perhaps equal, status to heterosexual relationships. Religion and family are the most influential factors which shape the views of the respondents. Findings suggest marked differences in the views of religious and non-religious students with regard to gender norms and acceptance of homosexuality. Fields of study appear to be a significant determinant of students' views on sexual and gendered norms. Ultimately, the paper is explorative in nature, and starts to address a phenomenon that is under-researched within this context.