# CHECK IT  HE - Best Practices and Responses Guidance

## *Introduction to the Guide*

Each of the topics of the CHECKIT HE toolkit topics is included below, with a specially created new section to provide an overview of practices and responses that you might want to use in your own higher education institution (HEI). Please note that this guide does not include our first output, which is a project report, as it did not cover practices for implementation. The driver for this guide is the requirement for easily accessible information formats for capacity building across the tertiary sector across Europe and beyond. We hope it is user-friendly and clear.
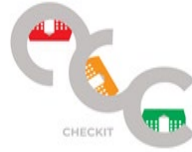
The guide enables readers to locate documents relevant to developing policies and implementing change, whilst thinking about what can be done within their own HEI contexts. It focuses on building knowledge to change hate and extremist responses. One of the difficulties comes in providing examples that readers can follow up online because many practices are quietly kept in-house within HEIs and so there are few places where we can see how these vital issues of countering hate and extremism are being handled. In the six CHECKIT HE toolkits you will see examples from different countries cited, but many of these do not have a digital (or real) paper trail to follow up because of the privacy of the internal activities of the HEIs involved.  Here we offer generic guidance, based on the topic areas of the toolkits but extending that knowledge to practice, and links to openly available guidance and materials to help you.

Finally, before we turn to each area, we want to state that challenging hate and extremism in HE is an emerging field.  In reading this you are stepping up to a problem that is a challenge and every changing. We hope the resources below can help you to think how to address these matters in your own contexts, but please do contact us for more information.  You can do so through our webpages at: CHECKIT HE – Countering Hate and Extremism on Campus – Knowledge Innovation and Training in Higher Education - School of Social Sciences | Birmingham City University (bcu.ac.uk)

Please be aware this is guidance is indicative and not exhaustive. You will need to check the usefulness of the advice in your own contexts and countries. The advice here is just that and provides guidance for planning how to proceed, it is not prescriptive or designed to replace your own HEIs plans, strategies, or policies.

We will be happy to assist you in developing your own responses to hate and extremism in your own HEI context and please do come along to one of our regular events or our planned annual conference in 2024.

## Understanding Terminology:

Before this resource turns to discuss key aspects of guidance and response that you might consider in addressing hate on HEI campuses, it is useful to provide understanding of key terms that are used in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives and in relation to hate and extremism. It is vital to ensure that all employees and leadership understand what these terms mean or the ways they are used today. The definitions below are taken from Council of Europe (2023) Inclusion and Anti-discrimination Programmes, unless noted otherwise:

**Equality:** Equality in the workplace means treating all individuals fairly and without discrimination. This includes equal opportunities and fair treatment, irrespective of their background, characteristics, or beliefs.

**Diversity:** Diversity encompasses all the differences that make individuals unique, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, and more. Embracing diversity means recognising and valuing these differences.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is about creating a workplace culture where every person in an HEI or other organisation feels respected, valued, and included. It means actively involving everyone, regardless of their background, in decision-making and daily activities.
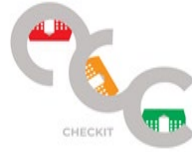
**Participation and inclusion in EDI Approaches**: This relates to the need to ensure that those most negatively affected by the issues of lack of inclusion, discrimination and hate and abuse in societies, must be given a core role in explaining their experiences, needs and requirements. It is not enough for others to define the needs of groups, based on their assumptions, biases and lack of knowledge. In the past, many attempts at embedding equality into organisations, including HEIs, has been involved in merely reinforcing previous bad practice by not including the voice of those directly affected. Lived experience is key here but with the caveat that groups should not be expected to do the EDI work for HEIs and that any engagement should attract proper financial disbursement for time, energy and expert knowledge. Those with lived experiences of exclusion, discrimination and hate are experiential experts.

**Hate Crime:** The European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2023) states that hate crime is, *"Violence and offences motivated by racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, or by bias against a person's disability, sexual orientation, gender identity are all examples of hate crime".* They note that these crimes can affect anyone in society. But whoever the victim is, such offences harm not only the individual targeted but also strike at the heart of EU commitments to democracy and the fundamental rights of equality and non-discrimination.

**Extremism:** There exists no commonly agreed legal definition of the concept of extremism across European Union Member states and partner nations. A comparison study commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office in 2020 showed that six countries —

Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) — all define "terrorism" in their national legislation, but often relied only on administrative practices or working definitions of "extremism" or "right-wing extremism" and this seems to be the case in most EU countries (European Commission, 2022).
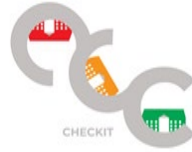
# Practice and Response Guidance for Gendered Hate and Extremism (Accompanying Toolkit 1)

Here we offer diverse good practices and responses to tackle hate, abuse, and extremism based on gender, which can help HEIs to ensure they response appropriately to exclusions based on gender and to hate behaviour too. Below are some of the key actions that you can take, working in your HEI with others, to challenge gender exclusions that enable hate behaviour to thrive. We have distilled some of the most important aspects of challenging hate and provided links to further information and innovations that might provide inspiration to you in your response within your HEI. The core issues are:

1. **Enactment of policies to increase women's full participation in HE**  This can relate to issues of recruitment and promotion.  It is harder for gendered hate to develop when women are involved in all aspects of HEI life. This also enables students to see there are role models and a route for their own development. This is a difficult one to work on as a single staff member and you need to work with others who also want to challenge gendered hate.  Advance HE in the UK have examined how women's participation influences the overall culture of HE.  This is a good starting point for thinking about policies and using this to influence your HEI context towards positive change in this area, https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/employment-and-careers/women For an example of how and HEI has created a roadmap for gender inclusion and challenging of gender discrimination, please see this link which is policy and practice work by TUAS who are one of the CHECK IT HE partners, and their website. https://www.tuas.fi/media-en/filer_public/8b/d4/8bd42503-062c-4afb-bb7d-a4d870f6c87f/equal_turku_uas_2023-2024_online.pdf
It shows their work in creating and enacting a roadmap to gender equality This might serve an example to inspire you or a discussion point for development of your own plans.

2. **Planning and implementing mandatory courses regarding the prevention and the fight against harassment, and gender violence for teachers, non-academic staff, and students.** Courses must be created separately and, additionally, embedded into mainstream teaching across the board. If you have an EDI unit of section with dedicated diversity and equality trained staff, these are experts who will be able to aid in development of courses, not just for students, but also for staff. Promotion of these is vital and teaching of the courses should be undertaken by staff who are enthusiastic. A useful resource to use to start courses off, particularly as pre-reading for discussion
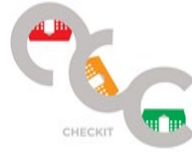
amongst staff or students is: https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/towards-equity-and-inclusion-in-higher-education-in-europe

3. **Developing initiatives and programmes to help students make informed choices, free of gender bias, regarding their future studies and careers**. Challenging hate is not just about acts of abuse it is about the whole culture. Where you raise gender confidence in women students around their futures, you necessarily make the environment unconducive to hate and abuse. It is particular importance to challenge sexist ideas about STEM and challenge notions of gendered courses, which typically relate to gender stereotypes. Hate and abuse in this area often hinge on jokes about women's capacities to undertake diverse jobs and this something that can be addressed in gender bias programmes.

4. **Engaging actively academic and non–academic staff in increasing their awareness about how to deal with gender-based claims and how to support those targeted by hate.** Quite often gender based hate and abuse claims are not believed. Ensuring staff can respond appropriately has to come from a place of knowledge. The EU Victim's Rights Directive is a useful starting point for thinking about how HEIs can support those experiencing hate-based abuse, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/criminal-justice/protecting-victims-rights/victims-rights-eu_en

5. **Create a gender equality plan**. A gender equality plan enables an HEI to assess where it is in terms of gender equality and then look forward to creating policies, procedures and structures that will help shape the HEI towards better support in relation to gender hate and discrimination. If your institution does not have one, try to work with other colleagues, your trade union and senior leaders to design this. It will help staff and students. Gender equality plans are part of an overall institutional strategy to map, prevent and react against gender hate and violence in campuses. They should be design and implemented throughout a participatory process in which students of all degrees can participate, by giving their suggestions, and identifying the major endeavours. There are a variety of options to take, when designing and implementing a gender equality plan. EU defined as mandatory some of them. According to directives of the European Commission (CE, 2021), the European Institute for Gender Equality, provide a gender equality plan tool (GEAR), which can be used by HEIs to examine their practice and ensure they are doing the right thing. This is available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep?language_content_entity=en Try to engage as many people as possible in Gender Equality Planning, recognising diverse lived experiences of gender in your organisation and societally.

6. **Creating codes of conduct as main policy documents for use across the HEI.** It is vital to create code of conduct around gender- based abuse and to ensure that these are widely promoted and understood. The British Council offer an excellent resource on gender equality across the world, which includes information on creating conduct codes to prevent hate and encourage inclusion. This is available at:
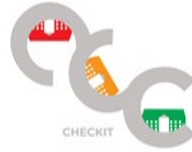
https://www.britishcouncil.org/gender-equality-higher-education-maximising-impacts
It is imperative that students and staff are aware of how serious hate crime and extremist attitudes are. Each country has different national policies on this – some that criminalise hate speech, for instance - but even where this is not in place, perpetrators should be encouraged to understand the seriousness of their actions and words. The European Commission document on extending hate crime provides an insight into the possible impacts of hate and extremism, which can be employed to explain why codes of conduct are so important in HE and society. This is available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/extending-eu-crimes-hate-speech-and-hate-crime_en

7. **Developing research tools and actively collecting data on gendered hate and abuse within one's own HEI** is important. Clearly, such data collection requires an institutional response, but it will need developing across all Faculties, Sections, Departments and so forth. Investment must come from higher up the institution structures to enable this to happen and then this can support Equality planning and evaluation.

8. **Condemnation of discriminatory attitudes inside the campuses or outside, with education to challenge the issues and support conduct codes**. This is part of wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion practice and should involve other equality strand issues, such as cultural, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality or political, ideological, religious or sexual orientations, namely actions of physical, verbal, moral or psychological offence, as well as situations of coercion, intimidation, harassment or humiliation. A zero-tolerance response is vital. This is important because there are issues that overlap between equality categories but that can have wide impact.

9. **Collect, distribute, and analyse data on indicators of gender-based extremism and violence on campuses.** Where incidents are taking place, it is essential these are recorded and collated. Central University systems need to be primed to be able to handle this data. Analysis of such incidents is important, especially to see where further issues might be prevented. This will also involve engagement with wider organisations.

10. **Reporting gendered hate crimes when they occur.** The European Agency for Fundamental Rights produced this supportive toolkit on reporting of hate crime, which is relevant for HEIs and staff who are concerned about any incidents. Whilst there are internal reporting systems and decisions need to be made about the seriousness of incidents, it may be that external reporting is more appropriate. https://fra.europa.eu/en/promising-practices/good-practice-guide-hate-crime-reporting

11. **Adopting gender neutral practices within classrooms and learning spaces.** HEI has the benefit that its focus is education, and this can be used to encourage challenge to hate speech, cyber bullying and other associated areas. In the toolkits we have outlined how this might be done but further information can be found at this report by the International Centre for the study of Radicalisation and Political Violence on

Countering Hate Speech Practices: https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Challenging-Hate.pdf
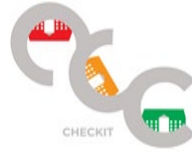
12. **Fostering gender sensitive campaigns that involve Student's Unions, and organizations in developing a fair and inclusive campuses.** Campaigning can make a different in terms of changing minds and attitudes, especially when done with sensitivity and recognising that gendered attitudes might come from a place of ignorance or even fear.

13. **Implementing codes of conduct on gendered abuse and hate speech - creating codes of conduct as main policy documents for use across the HEI.** It is vital to create code of conduct around gender-based abuse and ensure that these are widely promoted and understood. The British Council offer an excellent resource on gender equality across the world, which includes information on creating conduct codes to prevent hate and encourage inclusion. This is available at: https://www.britishcouncil.org/gender-equality-higher-education-maximising-impacts

14. **Create a Gender Equality Plan**. A gender equality plan enables an HEI to assess where it is in terms of gender equality and then look forward to creating policies, procedures and structures to help shape the HEI towards better support in relation to gender hate and discrimination. If your institution does not have one, try to work with other colleagues, your trade union, and/or senior leaders to design this and it will help staff and students. Gender equality plans are part of an overall institutional strategy to map, prevent, and react against, gender hate and violence on campuses. They should be design and implemented throughout a participatory process in which students across all courses, as well as staff from all sections, can participate. By giving their suggestions and feedback the plan will be improved. There are a variety of options to take when designing and implementing a gender equality plan. According to directives of the European Commission (CE, 2021), a HEI should create a gender equality plan, The European Institute for Gender Equality offer some support on examining gender practices through a tool called GEAR, which can be used by HEIs to audit and ensure they are doing the right thing. This is available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep?language_content_entity=en Try to engage as many people as possible in Gender Equality Planning, recognising the diverse lived experiences of gender in your organisation and societally.

15. **Condemnation of discriminatory attitudes inside the campuses or outside, to challenge the issues and support conduct codes**. This is part of wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion intersectional practice and should overlap with other equality strand issues, such as cultural, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality or political, ideological, religious, or sexual orientations. A zero-tolerance response is vital. This is important because there are issues that overlap between equality categories but that can have wider impact.
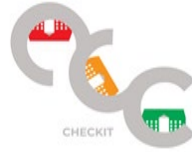
16. **Fostering collaboration between Higher Education institutions and other organisations, especially those targeted with gender-based violence prevention**. Try to always involve representatives from diverse stakeholder groups. HEIs can reach out to a host of different organisations to address hate, including national and local authorities, government officials, police forces, civil society organisations, students and students' associations, trade unions, as well as experts on promoting gender equality. Working in partnership can lead to better outcomes, especially where there are targets of abuse who may need proper support and help. For instance, Uni-SAFE is an EU project that has focused on gendered violence and HE and, although it finished in 2021, it provides information on how HEIs can work with NGOs and local, regional and national players to integrate best practice onto campus. https://unisafe-gbv.eu/blog/on-the-importance-of-addressing-gender-based-violence-in-universities-and-research-organisations/

The information above provides suggestions for ways forward, based on best practices identified by the CHECK IT HE team. As noted, you will need to work closely with others to make a change. This is not a path for one person to fight in an HEI. Look to colleagues and others to ensure that you can work together to improve practice, using the resources collated above as a foundation.

# Practice and Response Guide for Sexuality and Sexual Identity Based Hate (Accompanying Toolkit 2)

Sexual identity-based hate often manifests as discrimination, harassment, or violence and poses significant challenges to HEIs. To foster an inclusive and safe environment for all HEIs there is a need to address these issues proactively. This document outlines strategies to combat sexual identity-based hate and promote inclusivity. It also provides ways of challenging and responses that you can utilise within your own HEI setting. As with the other areas covered here in the guide, your ability to respond will be shaped by your position in the organisation and ability to act within your role or remit. Finding allies within staff, student groups and higher-level managers is important to being able to implement change. Links are provided here to policy documents and examples that will help you.

The key issues that must be focused upon in challenging sexuality and sexual identify based hate in HE are:

1. **Ensuring there is Visible Leadership Commitment**. To enact change in this area it is vital that it is openly seen that change is being supported. Senior managers of HEIs are crucial in promoting the right attitudes and ethos and providing their support to developments. Eliminating sexual identity-based hate must have that higher level support.  If it is not there then those wanting to ensure best practice will need to explain the issues to higher level managers, Rectors and so forth. Demonstrating the extent of the problem might be useful. The Council of Europe have created this document that outlines the increasing hate and abuse experiences by LGBTQI communities: 20210921-RisingHateLGBTI-EN.pdf (coe.int) HEI leaders across the institutions – from Departments, Faculties, Administrative or Library Information Sections, as well as Senior management, should set an example by championing diversity and inclusion, and by participating in relevant initiatives and training.

2. **Developing Policies and Procedures.** These should be clear and comprehensive anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies that explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity. This should not look like an 'add on' or after thought, and along with creation of these, there is a need to ensure that employees are aware of these policies and the process for reporting incidents. These must be promoted across the HEI to ensure that there is zero-tolerance of abuse related to this area. These policies should use EU wider policy as a centre point to ensure that there is strong recognition of the rights of LGBTQI+ people and communities. One resource that can be used to support policy development is from the European Parliament (2021) The rights of LGBTI people in the European Union (europa.eu) These policies

should include rubric for the documentation of incidents and how records will be maintained for legal and reporting purposes

3. **Create Mechanisms for Anonymous Reporting to Protect Victims from Potential Retaliation**. It is essential that anonymous reporting, general reporting, and whistleblowing be supported to ensure that target can report hate speech, acts or other forms of unacceptable – potentially criminal – behaviour.

4. **Create Codes of Conduct around Sexual Identity based Hate.** This is related to reporting outlined above. Codes of conduct need to be robust and clear, ensuring that students and staff know they exist and are being followed. These need to dovetail with those focused on other areas. The International Association of Universities have created a support document on institutional codes of ethics in HE, which is a useful starting point for examining the issues, especially if your HEI has not had codes of conduct in place for staff or students previously, https://etico.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/2017-09/Ethics_Guidelines_FinalDef_08.02.13.pdf

5. **Instigate Training and Awareness.** As with all the other areas covered in this good practice guide, training and awareness raising is crucial and should be a cornerstone of activity. Mandatory training programs to educate employees at all levels on sexual identity-related issues can be offered and should be put in place. These could include training on unconscious bias, LGBTQ+ history and terminology, and appropriate workplace behaviour. Such training can also be used to stimulate wider awareness raising about the impact of sexual identity-based hate and promote empathy. Where possible, lived experience should be the base of the training, but, as noted in other sections this should not be forced upon LGBTQI+ staff or community members or students, etc. Where there is involvement payment should be made as good ethical practice. Whilst not focused specifically on sexual identity-based issues, the European Institute for Gender Equality Gender Equality Toolkit (GEAR) provides transferable knowledge around tackling gender equality issues in academia and research and has an awareness raising focus that is useful - Training: awareness-raising and capacity building | European Institute for Gender Equality (europa.eu) The Council of Europe document on sexual identity hate crimes, provides a starting point for dialogue in HE training, to demonstrate the extent of the problem and the consequences for targets of such abuse: https://rm.coe.int/gt-adi-sogi-2023-3-en-european-report-sogiesc-based-hate-crime-final-t/1680ac3c18

6. **Ensure there is proper training for those handling case of sexual identity-based hate or incidents.** Implementation of a plan of clarification sessions and lectures with the presence of people informed about the legal framework and witnesses and victims of cases of racism, who are willing to share their stories.

7. **Ensure recruitment for staff is diverse and inclusive**. As well as being fair, this also ensures diverse students feel comfortable studying – this is relevant for sexuality and sexual orientation as it is for other equality strand areas. It is imperative to ensure that

job postings, interviews, and evaluations do not contain gender or sexual orientation biases. UNESCO have a useful document on wider gender biases that is relevant to examining these issues. This is available at: https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/smashing-gen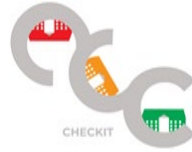der-stereotypes-and-bias-and-through-education Encourage LGBTQ+ candidates to apply and be transparent about your organization's commitment to inclusivity. Another useful resource is the Report from the European Universities Association (2019) on diverse and inclusive recruitment in HE - https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

8. **Create forums for Staff and Students to be able to discuss hate, inclusion, and their experiences.** Creating safe spaces for LGBTQI+ HE staff and students provides an opportunity for them to experience peer support.  However, you also need forums that will act as a critical friend to the HEI in creating change and such groups can help educate the organisation, provide resources, and advocate for LGBTQ+ employees. Whilst gaining diverse voices and experiences is important, there needs to be a response and action.  HEIs need to address how change will be implemented.

9. **Accommodations and Support.**  It is important to create a supportive environment for transgender and gender non-conforming employees. This is part of a wider HEI response, but helping to fight with colleagues for gender-neutral restrooms and locker facilities, use of preferred names and pronouns, for instance, are actions all staff can take to help.

10. **Involve External Stakeholders to support the development of good HEI practice in anti-hate and sexuality and sexuality identity.**  Collaboration with LGBTQ+ organisations and communities to learn, support, and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. In Finland there are voluntary organisations that work in tandem with HEIs trying to build policy and practice around sexual identity-based hate and exclusion. For instance, the Seta Association, trains LGBTQI+ community members to be experts by experience. These volunteers help educate HEI students and professionals. They use their own experience to break down old views and open awareness the personal experience of being an LGBTQ + person in the Finnish society. This will also mean investing in visible engagement with LGBTQI NGOs, groups and communities, including participating in in Pride parades, sponsorships, or diversity and inclusion conferences. However, Universities UK emphasise that standing up against sexuality related hate must not be about one off events - https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/insights-and-analysis/how-universities-can-support-lgbtq a point also made the European Commission (2020) 'Spotlight on the EU and LGBTI Equality' - Spotlight on THE EU AND LGBTI EQUALITY (europa.eu)

11. **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement.**  To evaluate change there is a need to continuously assess the effectiveness of your efforts to address sexual identity-based hate, seek feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders and adapt policies and practices accordingly. This is an ongoing task. The US based Coalition of
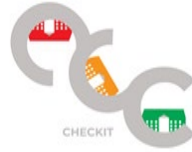
Communities of Color (TOSRRE, 2014) offer an evaluation tool, which can be modified to examine other areas of HEI performance, this is available at: https://racc.org/wp-content/uploads/buildingblocks/foundation/CCC%2020Tool%20for%20Organizational%20Self-Assessment%20Related%20to%20Racial%20Equity.pdf.

12. **Mentoring and Support Can be Developed.** Mentoring, support, and buddying can help students who feel highly excluded to gain confidence and this also works for staff. For instance, at the University of Birmingham, UK, there is a LGBTQI+ mentoring scheme which has been running, with support from the careers service, for the past five years. Over 50 students have been matched with employees in the city from a range of occupations. The aim of the mentoring scheme is to offer LGBTQI+ students with the chance to have open conversations with 'out' LGBTQI+ employees, initially about coming out issues at work and in subsequent conversations to discuss broader topics such as choosing employers, job applications, interviews, relationships with work colleagues, clients, and customers (University of Birmingham, 2022).

Creating a workplace free from sexual identity-based hate is a moral imperative and beneficial for the overall success and well-being of HEIs. By implementing the strategies outlined in this document, organisations can promote an inclusive culture that values and respects the sexual identity of all employees, thus fostering a more equitable and harmonious work environment.

# Best Practices Around Race and Ethnicity Based Hate (Accompanying Toolkit 3)

This section focuses on the issues raised in Toolkit 3 of the CHECK IT HE project, providing best practice and response resources. It is important to remember the intersectional nature of forms of hate and extremism beliefs/actions. Quite often hate around race and ethnicity, is overlaid by hate related to religions, genders and other perceived or believed aspects of individuals. Within HE it is just as complex a topic as it is in 'general societies'.
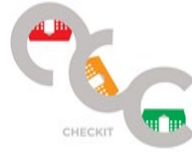
Below we outline some key issues to consider when ensuring HEIs address hate and extremism in relation to race and ethnicity. Resources are suggested to help develop policy or upgrade the policy already in existence in your own setting. The best practice is not prescriptive and there will be differences in approaches needed in different contexts. The material serves as a starting point for key issues in developing HEI responses.

Addressing and preventing race hate in HEIs is crucial for fostering a diverse, inclusive, and safe environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Here are some best practices for higher educational institutions to deal with and prevent race hate:

1. **Leadership Commitment**: If you have read some of the other sections on best practices around anti-hate in HEIs in this guide, you will know that commitment of leadership is central to all the areas presented previously in the document. Senior managers of HEIs need to model change to other staff and students. However, it can be difficult to ensure they understand the urgency of some issues relating to hate crime. In relation to race and ethnicity-related hate and abuse, some key documents can be used to demonstrate that urgency. The European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2023) recently published survey results showing growing racism against Black People across Europe. https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/being-black-eu UNESCO have noted the problematic position of EU HEIs as spaces that perpetuate racism and racist principles, whilst potentially being spaces of resistance against racism. https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2021/11/22/higher-education-both-fights-and-reproduces-racism/ For leaders, bringing these discussions into their awareness is important as the level of race and ethnicity inequalities in education is becoming a key indicator for HEI success in many countries and this can be brought to their attention. Having Senior Management/Leadership support is vital to implementing change. Leaders should set an example by actively promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of campus life.

2. **Embedding new Policies and Procedures around Racism and Race Hate into HEI Practice**: many countries are requiring that HEIs, develop and communicate clear and comprehensive anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and hate speech policies that explicitly include race and ethnicity. However, such policies are only as good as they
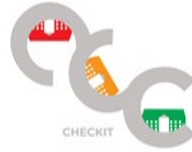
are easily accessible and known to all members of the campus community. Moreover, these need to establish a transparent process for reporting incidents and provide options for anonymous reporting to protect victims from backlash from those they are complaining about.

3. **Provide mandatory training programmes for students, faculty, and staff that focus on recognising, addressing, and preventing race hate.** Such training requires inclusion of topics such as cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias, and the historical context of racism, which is also likely to involve examination of colonialism and decolonising the University/curriculum. Education programmes, hand in hand with raising awareness about race hate, can go some way to promoting empathy and understanding. Some useful material to include in training is the EC Tackling Discrimination pages at, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/tackling-discrimination_en, Another useful resource to use to start courses off, particularly as pre-reading for discussion amongst staff or students is: https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/towards-equity-and-inclusion-in-higher-education-in-europe and, additionally, the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025, which provide useful insights on racism across the EU.

4. **Establish and maintain, reporting and support systems.** it is vital to create accessible and user-friendly mechanisms for reporting incidents of race hate, including online reporting options**.** This might include implementation of a dedicated support system for Victims/Targets, including Counselling Services and guidance on legal and administrative processes.

5. **Ensure robust sanctions for race and ethnicity-based hate, including involving external agencies.** In many countries race and ethnicity hate is often recognised as either a hate incident or a hate crime. In other words, abusive behaviours or hate speech, can fall under criminal justice procedures and responses. HEIs must be prepared to assess what has happened but then call in the relevant external organisations when needed. In some cases, this might mean right away, according to the gravity of the situation. Staff will need training on making decision around this and when to refer on. A useful starting point for considering when hate becomes a crime, can be found at the EC page on combatting hate speech and hate crime: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-hate-speech-and-hate-crime_en

6. **Evaluation and monitoring of race and ethnicity hate and HEI response.** To be able to respond properly to hate, it is vital to effectively evaluate how the HEI is doing in relation to these issues, examine change over time and adapt action and responses in relation to that data. The US based Coalition of Communities of Color (TOSRRE, 2014) offer an evaluation tool, which is useful for all organisations, including HEIs, in examining their progress and responses in relation to race and ethnicity issues on campus. https://racc.org/wp-
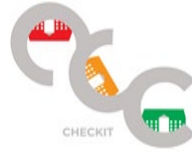
content/uploads/buildingblocks/foundation/CCC%2020Tool%20for%20Organizational
%20Self-Assessment%20Related%20to%20Racial%20Equity.pdf.

7. **Embed Inclusive Curriculum**. It will be no surprise that a key aspect of HEI response to race and ethnicity-based hate is to examine the curriculum for exclusions that have been built into curriculum in the past. This must be considered in relation to two aims, 1. That racism and exclusionary material is removed and, 2. That issues of race and ethnicity, which have been hidden or overshadowed in the past, are foregrounded and given rightful importance. This can be as basic as including Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority theorists in a Sociology course or covering the work of Islamic scientists on STEM courses. It might also be to include Roma and Sinti perspectives on European history, or include excluded group views on society, such as those of the Sami indigenous European communities. The European Union's pages on Inclusive Curriculum can help with this, https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/inclusive-education and the Eurydice Report on inclusive curriculum in HE, at, Eurydice Report (2019) 'Towards Equality and Inclusion in Higher Education' is a helpful resource and is available at: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/towards-equity-and-inclusion-higher-education-europe. Materials on decolonisation of HEIs, such as the guidance given in the European Commission (2023) European Strategy for Universities, is also useful, https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/communication-european-strategy-for-universities-graphic-version.pdf Inclusive curriculum involves facing stark truths about European history but is vital to ensure inclusivity into the future. In particular, to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive, diverse, and representative of a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds and people. Encouraging Faculty to incorporate discussions on race, racism, and privilege into their courses, fosters critical thinking and dialogue.

8. **Cultural Centres and Safe Spaces: Establish cultural centres and safe spaces on campus**. These can be places where students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds can gather, share experiences, and find support. These spaces should be equipped with resources and trained staff to promote inclusivity and understanding.

9. **Allyship and Anti-Racism Initiatives**: Promote allyship and anti-racism initiatives on campus to encourage active engagement in combating race hate. Host workshops, seminars, and dialogues to educate the community about systemic racism and how to be effective allies.

10. **Zero-Tolerance and Accountability.** Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for race hate, with clear consequences for perpetrators. Ensure accountability through thorough investigations, timely resolution, and support for victims. Document incidents and maintain records for legal and reporting purposes.

11. **Ensure inclusivity in recruitment of staff and selection of students (where this takes place) and support these staff with mentorship/coaching opportunities.** Strive for diversity in faculty and wider staff hiring to reflect the diversity of the student
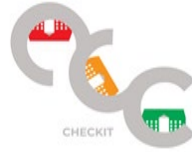
body. Support faculty and staff from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds with mentorship and advancement opportunities. The Report from the European Universities Association (2019) on diverse and inclusive recruitment in HE is a useful resource - https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

12. **Community and Stakeholder Engagement.** HEI engagement with BAME groups locally and nationally, through authentic community and civic engagement is vital. Working in partnership with external groups is essential to building trust and feelings of safety for diverse students. Building relationships with local communities and organisations that advocate for racial equity and social justice can help with this. HEI participation in initiatives, partnerships, and events that promote diversity and inclusion is also important and can be reinforced by Senior Managers getting involved and leading in this area too.

13. **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement**. As with all areas of diversity, equality, and inclusion, it is important for HEIs to create assessment and evaluation strategies, so that they can monitor progress around race and ethnicity hate, experience and attainment and the effectiveness of efforts to deal with and prevent race hate. This includes regularly collecting feedback from students, faculty, and other staff to adapt policies and practices accordingly. Audit of HE improvement in EDI is crucial, one offered by the Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network may be useful to you in developing this, it is available at: 200702 Equality and Diversity Audit Framework Checklist for Higher Education Institutions.indd

14. **Transparency, Reporting and Feeding back.** Taking reports seriously also involves ensuring that annual reports about campus race and ethnicity hate climate, diversity, and inclusion efforts, including data on race hate incidents and their resolutions are collected and responded to. This could use some of the tools included above. Once shared this progress requires review and engagement by the campus community to solicit feedback and, therefore, to continue in a process of continual development through that engagement and participation.

## Conclusion:

Challenging and addressing race hate in higher educational institutions is an ongoing and critical mission. By following these best practices as a foundation guide, institutions can create a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes equity, respect, and understanding among all members of the campus community.
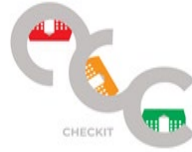
# Practice and Response Guide - Religion, Faith, and Belief Based Hate (Accompanying Toolkit 4)

Creating an action plan for higher education institutions to prevent hate and extremism against different religious or faith groups is a critical step in fostering a safe and inclusive campus environment.  It important to remember how other forms of hate can overlap with hate against religion, faith, and belief. For instance, racism, sexism, and sexual identity-based hate can also intersect with hate around religion or faith. Below, aspects of action planning in this area are presented, along with links to key issues. To address religion, faith, and belief-based hate you (or your HEI) would want to think about:

1.  **Gaining HEI Leadership support** In order to effect change it is necessary to ensure that leaders from your HEI are on board and prepared to support developments against religion, faith and belief based hate. Quite often, hate crime and discrimination overall is less focused upon than other day-to-day priorities. The assumption that religion is no longer so important in European societies can have an impact on this too. However, statistics from across Europe show that many students do have beliefs and faith, some thorough orthodox religion and others through forms of individual spirituality, etc. Data collected by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights on hate crimes and discrimination, including those related to religion or belief, are available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/hate-crime The data show a year by year increase in hate crime associated with belief with Islamophobia and antisemitism being of particular concern. However, they note the vulnerabilities of all belief systems today. Similarly, Pew Foundation Research can be used to demonstrate the rise in religious hate, Harassment of religious groups continues in more than 90% of countries | Pew Research Center

2.  **Establishing a Task Force.** One possible first step could be to create a task force or committee dedicated to addressing hate and extremism against religious or faith groups on campus.  It is vital that this group include representatives from diverse religious and faith communities, faculty, staff, and student organisations. It is important to remember that some faiths are highly organised and structured, and others might be less so. For instance, spirituality is often forgotten as an important aspect of some students' lives, but this may involve faith and belief, without necessarily any institutional structures. Recognising differences in belief and religion will enable you to tackle the issues much more broadly and inclusively.
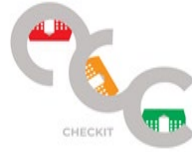
3. **Policy development.** Development of internal policies on faith and belief-based hate and the communication of these in clear and comprehensive anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and hate speech policies that explicitly include protection for religious and faith-based identities, is necessary. UNESCO have a series of resources on antisemitic hate in HEI, including generic help for policy development against all religious hate, this is available at: https://www.unesco.org/en/education-addressing-antisemitism

4. **Ensure inclusivity in recruitment of staff and selection of students (where this takes place) and support these staff with mentorship/coaching opportunities.** HEIs should trive for diversity in hiring, in to reflect the diversity of the student body. Faculty and staff from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds should be supported with mentorship advancement opportunities. The Report from the European Universities Association (2019) on diverse and inclusive recruitment in HE is useful - https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

5. **Developing reporting mechanisms:** Create accessible and user-friendly mechanisms for reporting incidents of hate and extremism against religious or faith groups, including anonymous reporting options. Additionally, a dedicated support system for targets/victims, including counselling services and guidance on legal and administrative processes should be instigated. Staff who are to be involved in disciplinary or other processes also require training in this role, legal aspects and when to signpost on to other help.

6. **Training and education**. Use of training can be helpful and mandatory training should be considered for students, faculty, and staff that focuses on recognizing, addressing, and preventing hate and extremism against religious or faith groups.  In terms of content, this should include training on cultural and religious sensitivity, interfaith dialogue, and the historical context of religious discrimination and extremism. A useful resource to use to start courses off, particularly as pre-reading for discussion amongst staff or students is: https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/towards-equity-and-inclusion-in-higher-education-in-europe

7. **Evaluation of whether external criminal justice or security agency involvement is required.** Some hate incidents on campus around religion and belief will be serious enough to warrant external engagement with Police or other agencies. Staff need to be trained on this and students aware that external engagement is a possibility to maintain campus safety.  A useful starting point for considering when hate becomes a crime, can be found at the EC page on combatting hate speech and hate crime: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-hate-speech-and-hate-crime_en

8. **Audit of current curriculum and design of inclusive curriculum**: It is vital to ensure that the current curriculum is inclusive and respectful of diverse religious and faith backgrounds. Where there are issues, this would need urgent redress. Faculty should
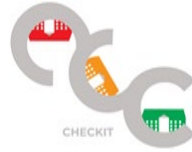
be encouraged to incorporate discussions on religion, interfaith dialogue, and religious diversity into their courses. This is challenging because of the sensitivity of the issues but what is now termed 'brave conversations' or 'brave pedagogy,' must be prepared to examine topics that are difficult. Staff will need to be trained for this. Inclusive curriculum should be examined in all subjects and levels of the HEI, from foundation and short courses through to degrees and postgraduate provision. The Eurydice Report (2019) 'Towards Equality and Inclusion in Higher Education' is a helpful resource and is available at:

https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/towards-equity-and-inclusion-higher-education-europe

9. **The Importance of interfaith initiatives:** If you are to address religious hate and intolerance in your HEI, promotion of interfaith initiatives that foster dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among religious and faith communities on campus are vital. Whilst many HEIs have these connections and some even have religious representatives in situ on campuses, often the profile of these groups is low. Raising awareness of their involvement and contribution to HEI life is crucial. Likewise, organising interfaith events, dialogues, and service projects to build bridges between different religious groups has been found to be helpful by many HEIs.

10. **Zero-tolerance and accountability**. Enforcing a zero-tolerance policy for hate and extremism against religious or faith groups, with clear consequences for perpetrators shows the seriousness of the HEI in addressing the issues and supporting targets of hate. Similarly, ensuring accountability through thorough investigations, timely resolution, and support for targets/victims does the same.

11. **Community engagement with wide stakeholders.** Building relationships with local religious and interfaith organizations that advocate for religious tolerance and diversity is important for inclusion. Moreover, participation initiatives, partnerships, and events that promote respect for religious and faith identities could be built into the HEI calendar.

12. **Evaluation and Improvement.** Regular assessment to ensure the effectiveness of your HEIs' efforts in preventing hate and extremism against religious or faith groups is required. Feedback from students, faculty, and wider staff is needed to adapt policies and practices accordingly.

13. **Transparency and reporting**. Annual reports on campus climate, diversity, and inclusion efforts, including data on incidents related to hate and extremism against religious or faith groups. Progress should be shared openly, and feedback encouraged.
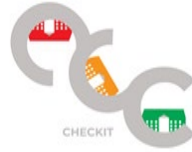
**Conclusion**:

Preventing hate and extremism against different religious or faith groups in higher education institutions is an ongoing and vital endeavour. By following this action plan, institutions can create an inclusive and welcoming campus environment that respects and celebrates religious and faith-based diversity while actively countering hate and extremism.

# Practice and Response Guide, Disability and Chronic Illness Best Practices for HEIs (Accompanying Toolkit 5)

Incorporating best practices for the inclusion of disabled people and those with chronic illnesses in your HEI organisation is not just about meeting legal obligations; it's also about creating an equitable and diverse workplace where all individual's skills and talents are recognized and valued. Here are some best practices to promote the inclusion of disabled people and those with chronic illnesses in HEIs and the specific contexts of tertiary education. The key issues mentioned here arose from the development of the toolkit.

*Some main areas to focus upon in best practice for disability and chronic illness inclusion in HE are (this list is indicative, not exhaustive):*
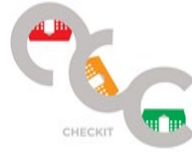
1. **Leadership Commitment.** Ensure that your HEI leadership team is fully committed to disability inclusion. Leaders should set an example by demonstrating their commitment and encouraging others to do the same. In some HEIs in Europe, certain celebratory weeks are held around disability and inclusion. These often serve to showcase leaders who are disabled, information is given about their role and careers and their views on disability.
It is often difficult for other staff groups to influence leaders if they are not part of that higher level policy and strategy echelon. However, you can still try to ensure best practice, and this can be done through staff forums, emailing senior leaders and through your staff union (if you have one). The European Council of the European Union Consilium site has facts and figures that can be used to demonstrate the vast differences in student experience between disabled and non-disabled students. It is available here:https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/disability-eu-facts-figures/ and the European Students' Union also emphasise the difficulties that impact on student achievement and inclusion for disabled and chronically ill students, https://esu-online.org/disabilities-students-higher-education/ These are useful to use with Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Senior Management of HEIs as they emphasise the impacts of HEIs failing to support students, in regard to achievement and employability.

2. **Running Education and Awareness Sessions.** It would seem obvious in educational establishments such as HEIs that education and training is core to all aspects of their ethos, work and activity. However, it is surprising how many tertiary educational providers fail in this regard. It is imperative to educate all employees about disability
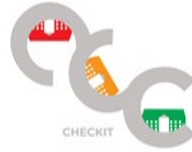
issues and raise awareness about the importance of inclusion. Offer training programme on disability that challenge assumed knowledge, biases and explains the challenges disabled individuals face, and the value they bring to the organization. The Council of Europe (2022) Factsheet on Awareness Raising in relation to Persons with Disabilities is a useful tool to use in education sessions with staff and students and is available at: https://rm.coe.int/factsheet-awareness-rev-2-/16808b4e46 Another useful training aid is the European Commissions adopted post-2020 Disability Strategy, which is a 10 year strategy towards inclusion and this provides trainers with ample evidence of the exclusion of disabled people, including in higher education - https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200604STO80506/a-new-ambitious-eu-disability-strategy-for-2021-2030

3. **Ensuring Accessible Physical Environments.** Make HEIS physically accessible to all students, visitors and employees. Ensure ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and designated parking spaces are available.  Make sure that common areas and workstations are designed to accommodate mobility aids. Toilet facilities must be easily available and provide facilities that cater for a variety of people.  The assumption is that this is problem primarily for old buildings, but this is not the case – all buildings can present problems of inclusion for disabled people and those with chronic conditions. Old buildings may need modifications but the modern design fixation with the clean lines of accepted architecture today creates problems for many groups. For those with hearing impairments, reflective surfaces can lead to overload of rebound noise due to lack of attenuation. Similarly shiny pillars and recessive steps can make modern buildings very difficult for those with sight impairments or those who have balance problems.  The key issue is that physical environment must be accessibility audited but also such processes must involved disabled people in testing as to whether environments work for them.  Ideally, proposals and plans for new buildings should be presented to all users, with a particular focus on ensuring that those with disabilities or chronic illness are consulted on designs. The International Federation of Catholic Universities, provides a useful guide to key issues relating to physical environments and disabled students (2019), https://www.cirad-fiuc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Policy-Brief-Version-finale-FINAL-PDF.pdf and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya also provide a discussion of physical environment issues that can be used to base policy upon, https://www.uoc.edu/portal/en/news/actualitat/2022/221-disability-university.html

4. **Flexible Study Arrangements.**  Many HEIs have specialised support services to help those with disabilities. It is vital that students feel able to disclose disabilities or chronic conditions, knowing they will be helped.  Professionals in these services can act as supporters and advocates for students, where they feel unable to speak for themselves or explain their needs. It has to be remembered that the power dynamics work against students who often feel unable to do so and may be concerned that any information will be held against them or will influence their studies. Flexible study arrangement might also mean timetabling learning at different times, allowing food or drink into teaching rooms or creating online learning provision to enable disabled or chronically ill students to keep up with their studies. The European Disability Forum have a range
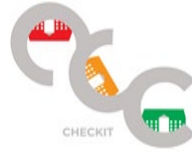
of policy documents around flexible learning, ensuring that disabled and chronically ill students can continue to study. These are a useful base for dialogue within HE and considering different ways of supporting flexible study - https://www.edf-feph.org/education-policy/

5. **Reasonable Accommodations.** As with flexible study arrangements, reasonable changes should be allowed to help students to study to their potential. This might mean moving deadlines or providing allowance for more time, changing an assessment enable a student to be assessed differently, as well as allowing them to use other forms of technology for their studies that other students might not typically be allowed to use. The key thing is to have a holistic approach. These accommodations also should extend to staff too, where disability or chronic illness makes it very hard for them to be able to do their job within the HEI, for instance being able to use assistive technologies, ergonomic equipment, or modified workspaces.

6. **Supporting Student Disability Disclosures:** As noted above, a culture where students and others feel safe disclosing their disabilities and requesting accommodations is necessary. This is about trust and feeling of safety and is related to all the other aspects here, in terms of creating the right culture and ethos within HE to make a difference.

7. **Diversity and Inclusion Training.** As noted in other sections, training is vital to foster understanding and empathy and challenge unconscious bias, as well as overt discrimination. Students and staff with disabilities and/or chronic conditions should be encouraged to be involved with this and be renumerated for doing so – but only where they feel happy to be involved. It is not the job of disabled or chronically ill people to have to train others in HEIs in their experiences. However, where they feel able to do so, and choose to support this freely, they should be seen as experts in their field from experiential knowledge. **Training for Handling of Cases is also vital.** Implementation of a plan of clarification sessions and lectures with the presence of people informed about the legal framework and witnesses and victims of cases of disability or chronic illness-based hate, who are willing to share their stories and lived experiences.

8. **Developing Mentorship Support.** Implementing mentorship programs and peer support networks that can provide guidance and support for disabled students and even employees, is important but does not replace good EDI practice in other ways. In other words, mentorship and support is of no use if the structures of HEIs do not support people properly and there is not a decided focus on ensuring inclusion. Where there is that commitment, then mentorship schemes are helpful for instance in helping students consider their careers and futures and action plan towards success in employment and other aspects of life. The same is the case for staff, mentoring and support is only as good as that being supported by real and genuine commitment to equality. Although from outside of Europe, the National Mentoring Resource Centre, in the USA, has useful practice and policy material on mentoring disabled youth up to age 25, and includes discussion of support for students and this is available at
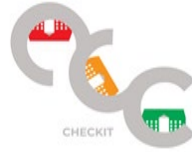
https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resource/mentoring-for-youth-with-disabilities/

9. **Creating Student Feedback/Consultation Groups** Establishing student feedback or consultation groups, where experiences can be shared and feedback, and that allow advocacy for change within the organisation and better practice, is really important but, as noted above, in involving experiential experts, they must be valued, paid and recognised fully. The UK Department of Education Inclusive Education Report, has a section outlining how HEIs can gain disabled student feedback and best practice in this regard, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-teaching-and-learning-in-higher-education

10. **Accessible Communications:** Being able to communicate and being involved in the communication of others is essential to feeling part of HEI life. Inclusive language should be used in all internal and external communications. Moreover, providing information in multiple formats, such as written, audio, and video, to accommodate different needs is imperative to ensuring that communication strategies are fair, equitable and inclusive. Additionally, ensure that all meetings and events are accessible. A sense of belonging and being valued for students, staff and other stakeholders is fostered by using these kinds of basic communication inclusive strategy.

11. **Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies:** Clear and comprehensive policies to prevent discrimination and harassment based on disability or chronic illness need to be developed and promoted widely to all staff. Providing avenues for reporting incidents and ensure a swift and fair resolution process is key. However, because of the gravity of hate crimes being reported across European HEIs, there should be a clear route for when other agencies must be involved. In particular this is the case with hate crimes or extremist views being used that threaten the security of the student body or other groups in HEIs. Too often, as shown in our main CHECK IT Report, little is done about very serious incidents, and this undermines HEI claims to being inclusive spaces. The Council of Europe Anti-discrimination Programmes webpage provides material on developing anti-discrimination policies and research on implementation. This available at: https://www.coe.int/en/web/inclusion-and-antidiscrimination

12. **Engaging with Other Relevant Disability and Chronic Illness Stakeholders in Society for Collaboration and Co-working**. As noted in our toolkit on this topic (IO7), there are variety of relevant stakeholders working in most countries around disability and chronic illness. These are an important resource for HEIs in improving practice. Why not encourage relevant NGOs for instance to help work on aspects of EDI, whether in the classroom or boardroom of your HEI? Of course, it is important to recognise their time and expertise, but they can aid in developing your inclusive practices.

13. **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement**: It is imperative to regularly review and assess your disability inclusion efforts. Make necessary adjustments to policies and
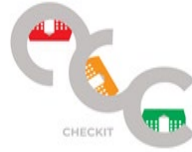
practices to ensure they remain effective and responsive to the changing needs of students and others. Involvement of students who have lived experience of disability and chronic illness can ensure evaluation and improvement targets the right issues and is fit for purpose. Building relationships with organizations and communities that support disabled individuals. Participate in events, sponsorships, and initiatives that promote disability inclusion. The Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network provides a tool for full HEI audit in relation to diversity, equality and inclusion, which is available here: 200702 Equality and Diversity Audit Framework Checklist for Higher Education Institutions.indd

Remember that inclusion is an ongoing process that requires a commitment to creating an environment where disabled individuals can thrive and contribute fully. By following these best practices, your organization can promote a culture of disability inclusion that benefits everyone.

# Practice and Response Guide, Organised Extremism (Accompanying Toolkit 6)

This part of the best practice guide relates to The CHECK IT HE project Output 8 (toolkit 6). It focuses on protocols and practices around organised extremism on HE campuses. What is included, as with the material in the toolkit, is not supposed to be an alternative to your HEI rules or practice in this area. It is designed to supplement and get you to reflect and think about organised extremism and responses, but you must be led by the local, regional, or national policy within which your HEI operates. Many countries ensure that those leading HEIs regularly liaise with security specialists from government or other agencies, to keep abreast of current risks and threats in relation to organised extremism. This section does not replace any of this knowledge, but it does help you to think about responses and encourage you to get involved in protecting your campus from organised forms of extremism. Note that organised extremist threats might come from the right or the left of politics (or from interest groups unrelated to politics) and it may stem from national or international issues. However, these issues can all have devastating impacts on wellbeing, public safety and life. These are serious matter and if you are in any doubt you must report any concerns to relevant agencies urgently.

The guide now turns to some general principles you may wish to implement or consider regarding organised extremism.

There are some generic resources that will help you to understand how the EU understands the concepts of hate, hate crime and extremism. Some of these are provided below:

*Hate crime victims support structures – materials collated and co-ordinated by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)*
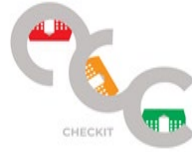
- Enhancing Stakeholder Awareness and Resources for hate crime victim support (EStAR)
- Ensuring justice, protection, and support for victims of hate crime and hate speech: 10 key guiding principles
- Overview of resources and initiatives to support progress on ensuring justice, protection, and support for victims of hate crime and hate speech in the EU Member States
- Hate Crime Victim Support: Policy Brief (EStAR project)


*Resources on Hate Speech that are co-ordinated by the European Commission:*

- Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online
- The European Online Hate Lab (2023)

**Countering Hate and Extremism on Campus: Knowledge & Training in HE (CHECKIT HE) - KA203-4F3852CE**

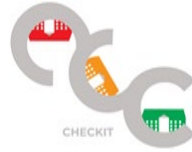- [Study on digital violent right-wing extremist content and manifestations of hate speech online (2021)](#)

It is important to supplement terminology and these understandings with materials from your national context, which may be different in approach or use different definitions than these generic EU ones above. From the perspective of enacting change in your HEI, you will be required to know and work within the national context. The CHECK IT HE output 8 (toolkit 6) will help with this, but that does not replace the need for you to undertake further national research on your country's policies.

The European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2023) states that hate crime is, "Violence and offences motivated by racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, or by bias against a person's disability, sexual orientation, gender identity are all examples of hate crime". They note that these crimes can affect anyone in society. But whomever the victim is, such offences harm not only the individual targeted but also strike at the heart of EU commitments to democracy and the fundamental rights of equality and non-discrimination.

There exists no commonly agreed legal definition of the concept of extremism across European Union Member states and partner nations. A comparison study commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office in 2020 showed that six countries — Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) — all define "terrorism" in their national legislation, but often relied only on administrative practice or working definitions of "extremism" or "right-wing extremism" and this seems to be the case in most EU countries (European Commission 2022).
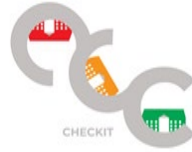
*Implementing Best Practice in HE might include (this list is indicative, not exhaustive):*

1. **Ensuring strong and engaged leadership in the field of hate and extremism**. It is vital that leaders are knowledgeable and committed to fighting the incursion of organised hate on campus. Whilst many might feel more confident dealing with individuals with particular extreme beliefs, serious extremism requires liaison with national intelligence forces and police services. Most Rectors, Vice Chancellors and other at very senior levels of HEIs are used to working with these connections, in relation to wider safety on campus concerns. The Radicalisation Awareness Network (2019) has published documents on the role of education in challenging extremism, including the need for strong leadership around extremism, see, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-08/ran_edu_different_ways_governments_can_support_schools_teachers_052019_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-08/ran_edu_different_ways_governments_can_support_schools_teachers_052019_en.pdf)

2. **Risk Assessment and Analysis.** Collaborating with agencies, as outlined above, it is vital that HEI conduct thorough, ongoing, risk assessment to identify vulnerabilities and potential threats on campus. As noted, collaboration with law enforcement agencies and intelligence services to stay informed about

potential risks and emerging threats is crucial as the intelligence landscape changes rapidly.
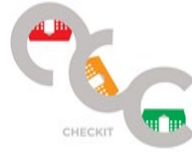
3. **Creation of a Campus-Wide Task Force:** Establishing a dedicated task force or committee composed of relevant stakeholders, including security personnel, faculty, staff, and students is prudent. This should be led by a senior University staff member, Rector or member of Directorate. It is important there is diverse staff representation on this group, recognising equality strand and those likely to be targets for extremism and hate. The committee or group should be tasked with developing and implementing counterterrorism policies and procedures. Ideally you would have representation from every Faculty or Section of the HEI.

4. **Auditing and Enhancing Existing Security Measures.** Regular upgrading of physical security infrastructure, such as access control systems, surveillance cameras, and emergency notification systems, should already be a norm within HEIs, but because they might be seen as 'soft targets' for terrorism, it is vital this be done with the highest priority and regularity. At the same time there should be regular drills and training exercises for Security Staff and other groups across the HEI. As one would expect for general safety, stringent background checks for staff and contractors with access to sensitive areas must be put in place, if not already used.

5. **Promoting Awareness and Education:** Although no one wishes to unduly frighten students, staff, and others on campus, the risk of hate and extremist action is real. It is important to develop educational programmes and workshops to raise awareness about radicalization, extremist ideologies, and the signs of potential threats. At the same time, students, faculty, and staff should be encouraged to report suspicious behaviour or concerns through an anonymous reporting system. Part of awareness raising is to ensure that positive aspects of inclusivity and respect are fostered within overall HEI culture and ethos. Positively presenting diversity and inclusion has been shown to help counter radicalisation in educational settings a report by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (2019) is available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-08/ran_edu_different_ways_governments_can_support_schools_teachers_05_2019_en.pdf

6. **Collaborate with Important External Key Stakeholders.** The obvious groups here will be police and law enforcement, but this will also be local communities, NGOs working in the field of hate and extremism, and others who have local knowledge and reach that will be of use to your HEI. It is important to maintain open communication and collaboration with these diverse groups and establish clear protocols for sharing information and intelligence related to potential threats. Lines of local communication in the event of an incident will be vital and these need to be in place prior to anything untoward occurring.

7. **Online Monitoring and Intervention**. As noted in our toolkits, cyberspace is a place of increasing risk in terms of hate and extremism, for HEIs and societies in general. HEIs need to develop systems to monitor online activities and social media platforms for signs of radicalization or extremist content and have a duty of care to do so. Concurrently, there is a need to develop a system for intervention and counselling for individuals exhibiting concerning online behaviour, or at the very least have a route/plan by which the HEI might deal with such students. Disciplinary systems need to encompass such routes, which might be appropriate. In other cases, serious hate and extremism views or actions might warrant severe or even police or law enforcement engagement immediately.

8. **Supportive Mental Health and Counselling Services.** As a general form of best practice that is used by many HEIs to increase inclusion and challenge hate, it is worth strengthening mental health services on campus to identify and support individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalization. In general, it is best practice to provide counselling and intervention programs for students facing personal or psychological challenges, which is a strategy visible across many European HEIs. Supporting individuals also leads to better overall campus wellbeing, empathy, and safety for all.

9. **Data Sharing and Analysis.** Most HEIs already have data analysis tools in place to identify potential trends and patterns that might threaten campus or institutional safety. However, these can also be used to examine radicalization and extremist activities on campus and can be developed to be more focused on possible extremism risks. Collaboration with police and intelligence agencies can aid with this – although some HEIs might also have their own experts 'in-house' in relation to computing, AI and machine learning and terrorism expertise, which can be employed to support developments. It goes without saying that anonymized data and insights should be shared with relevant authorities and organisations if the HEI believes this to be in the public interest and/or there is a severe threat involved.

10. **Carrying out Research and Project Work**. Engaging with other HEIs to focus on the issues of hate and extremism, locally, regionally, nationally or transnationally, can be very useful – as we have found with CHECK IT HE. Joint research and initiatives with other universities and institutions help to share best practices. Publication of this work in open access format provides opportunities to increase best practice beyond your own institution and keep people safe.

11. **Emergency Response Plan**. Whilst no one wants to think about the impacts of a serious outrage, it is important to develop and regularly update an emergency response plan specific to counterterrorism scenarios. The committee or group mentioned in point 1 above would be important in creating this and implementing its evaluation and update. Along with this, there is a need

to conduct training and drills to ensure that all stakeholders are familiar with the plan.

12. **Legal and Ethical Considerations:** any hate and extremism planning or action must always comply with local and national laws and respect individuals' civil liberties and privacy. Regular review and adjustment of policies to maintain this balance is needed.
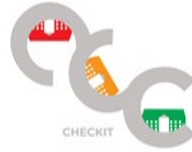
13. **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**. Regular assessment is required of the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures and policies, along with making any necessary adjustments and improvements based on feedback and evolving threats.

14. **Public Communication**. A clear and transparent communication strategy for addressing any incidents or threats on campus to students, staff, HEI stakeholders, local communities and so forth, is vital. However, any communication with the campus community and the public must be undertaken while considering security and privacy concerns.

By developing a plan for your HEI, which will be different for all HEIs (the advice above is not inclusive of all factors and scenarios to be considered), planning towards countering extremism and hate on campus can be actioned. HEIs have a duty to protect their campuses and communities against terrorism, while fostering an environment of open dialogue, tolerance, and inclusivity. The key is to balance security with the protection of civil liberties and individual rights.

## **List of Resources**:

Advance HE (2023) Women: supporting women in HEIs. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/employment-and-careers/women

British Council (2022) Report: Gender Equality in Higher Education - Maximising Impacts, Available at: https://www.britishcouncil.org/gender-equality-higher-education-maximising-impacts

The Coalition of Communities of Color (2014) Toolkit for Self- Assessment related to Equality available at: https://racc.org/wp-content/uploads/buildingblocks/foundation/CCC%2020Tool%20for%20Organizational%20Self-Assessment%20Related%20to%20Racial%20Equity.pdf.

Council of Europe (2015)  Hate Crimes and other Hate-motivated Incidents based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/gt-adi-sogi-2023-3-en-european-report-sogiesc-based-hate-crime-final-t/1680ac3c18

Council of Europe (2021)  Combating Rising Hate Against LGBTI People in Europe. Available at: 20210921-RisingHateLGBTI-EN.pdf (coe.int)

Council of Europe (2021) The Rights of LGBTI Communities in the European Union. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690601/EPRS_BRI(2021)690601_EN.pdf

Council of Europe (2023) Inclusion and Anti-discrimination Programmes. https://www.coe.int/en/web/inclusion-and-antidiscrimination

European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022) Good Practice Guide for Hate Crime Reporting, Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/promising-practices/good-practice-guide-hate-crime-reporting
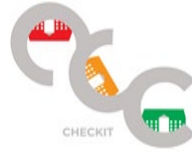
European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2023)  Being Black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/being-black-eu

European Commission (2020) Spotlight on the EU and LGBTI Equality. Available at: Spotlight on THE EU AND LGBTI EQUALITY (europa.eu)

European Commission (2021)  Extending EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime, Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/extending-eu-crimes-hate-speech-and-hate-crime_en

European Commission (2014) Tackling Discrimination. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/tackling-discrimination_en

European Commission (2022) European Educational Area, Quality Education and Training for All. Available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/towards-equity-and-inclusion-in-higher-education-in-europe

European Commission (2022) Between Extremism and Freedom of Expression: dealing with non violence extremist actors. Available at: home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-10/ran_dealing_with_non-violent_rwe_actors_082021_en.pdf

European Commission (2023)  European Strategy for Universities.  Available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/communication-european-strategy-for-universities-graphic-version.pdf

European Commission (2023) Victim's Rights in the EU.  Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/criminal-justice/protecting-victims-rights/victims-rights-eu_en

European Council of the European Union (2022) Facts and Figures on Disability in the EU. Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/disability-eu-facts-figures/

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2022) Gender Equality in Academia and Research, the GEAR Tool. Available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep?language_content_entity=en

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2022) Gender Awareness-Raising. Available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gender-awareness-raising?language_content_entity=en

European Parliament (2021) A New Ambitious EU Disability Strategy for 2021-2030. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200604STO80506/a-new-ambitious-eu-disability-strategy-for-2021-2030

Eurydice Report (2019) 'Towards Equality and Inclusion in Higher Education' is a helpful resource and is available at: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/towards-equity-and-inclusion-higher-education-europe

European Students' Union  Disabilities, Students and Higher Education. Available at: https://esu-online.org/disabilities-students-higher-education/
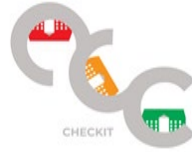
European Universities Association (2019) Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in European Universities. Available at: https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network (2022) Equality and Diversity Audit Framework. Available at: The Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network provides a tool for full HEI audit in relation to diversity, equality and inclusion, which is available here:

200702 Equality and Diversity Audit Framework Checklist for Higher Education Institutions.indd

International Association of Universities (2022)  IAU- MCO Guidelines for an Institutional Code of Ethics for Higher Education. Available at: https://etico.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/2017-09/Ethics_Guidelines_FinalDef_08.02.13.pdf

International Centre for the study of Radicalisation and Political Violence on Countering Hate Speech Practices, Challenging Hate: Counter-speech Practices in Europe. Available at: https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Challenging-Hate.pdf

National Mentoring Centre (2022)  Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities. Available at: https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resource/mentoring-for-youth-with-disabilities/

Pew Foundation (2018)  Rise in Religious Hate in 90% of Countries. Harassment of religious groups continues in more than 90% of countries | Pew Research Center

Radicalisation Awareness Network (2019) Education and radicalisation prevention: Different ways governments can support schools and teachers in preventing/countering violent extremism. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-08/ran_edu_different_ways_governments_can_support_schools_teachers_052019_en.pdf

TUAS (2023) Equal Turku UAS 2023-2024.  Available at: https://www.tuas.fi/media-en/filer_public/8b/d4/8bd42503-062c-4afb-bb7d-a4d870f6c87f/equal_turku_uas_2023-2024_online.pdf

UNESCO (2022) Addressing antisemitism through education. Available at: https://www.unesco.org/en/education-addressing-antisemitism

UNESCO (2023) Higher education both fights and reproduces racism. Available at, https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2021/11/22/higher-education-both-fights-and-reproduces-racism/

Universities UK (2022) How universities can support LGBTQ+ students beyond Pride month, Available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/insights-and-analysis/how-universities-can-support-lgbtq

UniSAFE (2023) On the importance of addressing gender-based violence in universities and research organisations. Available at:  https://unisafe-gbv.eu/blog/on-the-importance-of-addressing-gender-based-violence-in-universities-and-research-organisations/