



GenderSAFE
ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ACADEMIA

DRAFT

Baseline Policy Framework for Addressing Gender-Based Violence

The design and development of this output, led by Ana Brandl and Diana Puerto Michaut (Central European University), is the result of collaborative work of the entire GenderSAFE consortium.

This framework is work in progress, currently being tested by the members of the GenderSAFE CoP, and is to be further refined and expanded. If you would like to contribute to the final version by providing feedback or comments on the text, please contact us at framework@gendersafe.eu.

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GenderSAFE Partners



- *Issues for each institution to tailor are in “Subtle Emphasis” Style.*
- *Issues for the CoP to discuss are in “Emphasis” Style.*
- Where more content might be needed, it is signalled with suspension dots: ...
- Where institution-specific names and bodies are needed, it is signalled with suspension dots in square brackets: [...]

SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. Title

- 1 .1. This document is to be referred to as “[name]”.

Article 2. Legal framework

- 2 .1. This Policy is developed in accordance with and is intended to comply with the principles and requirements set forth in the following international legal instruments: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210), Directive 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence ...

- 2 .2. This Policy is formulated in compliance with the following national legislation: ...*

Article 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

- a. “The Institution” means [...]
- b. Reporting Party: anyone filing an anonymous, informal or formal report of gender-based violence.
- c. Contractors
- d. Employees
- e. Externals
- f. Others includes people who work for the institution in other contractual relation than employee (such as freelancers)
- g. Policy
- h. Respondent Party
- i. Students
- j. Institutional Premises
- k. Bystander/witness
- l. Visitors

SECTION 2. POLICY STATEMENT

Article 4. Institutional commitments

- 4 .1. The Institution adopts a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence, meaning that it treats all forms of gender-based violence with the highest level of importance and ensures that all reports are thoroughly investigated and responded to in accordance with institutional policy. This approach addresses incidents that occur along the entire continuum of violence, as defined in Article 10 (Definition of Gender-Based Violence), while maintaining proportionality and equity in sanctions. It involves capturing and addressing the full range of unacceptable behaviours, recognising the structural and intersectional nature of gender-based violence, focusing on the needs and safety of the victim/survivor, and adopting a comprehensive and coordinated set of policies and measures.
- 4 .2. The Institution recognises that gender-based violence occurs on a continuum encompassing the entire spectrum of unacceptable behaviours from the less visible instances onwards, that perpetuate gender inequalities and discrimination. If seemingly mild forms of misconduct, such as microaggressions, are left unaddressed, they have the potential to escalate into more serious and severe forms of violence. In this Policy, 'violence' encompasses all stages of this continuum.
- 4 .3. The Institution acknowledges that gender-based violence is a structural phenomenon. It reflects the unequal structural power relations in academia; it systematically fuels and, in turn, is fuelled by gender inequalities and discrimination; it is intersectional in nature, meaning that it is shaped by intersecting factors such as ethnic and racial origin, sexual orientation and socio-economic status and it is not merely the effects of individual attributes and behaviours. Therefore, the Institution is committed to changing the organisational culture by addressing the root causes of gender-based violence, not merely its symptoms.
- 4 .4. The Institution adopts a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach when addressing gender-based violence. It is victim-centred in that the needs and priorities of victims/survivors of violence are a central focus of any response. It is trauma informed as it strives to maximise the safety of the victim/survivor throughout the process, in terms of physical, psychological and emotional aspects, to prevent re-traumatisation or secondary victimisation.
- 4 .5. The Institution adopts the "7P Model" to address gender-based violence, based on the following pillars:
 - a. "Policies" refers to a coherent set of measures with a clear vision and strategy or to specific documents detailing such measures.
 - b. "Prevalence" refers to data and data collection aimed at estimating the extent of gender-based violence and at providing information on its different forms. Importantly, prevalence must apply an intersectional approach that considers people's ethnicity and origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, and their position within the organisation.

- c. “Prevention” refers to measures that promote changes in social and cultural behaviour through, e.g., induction materials for both staff and students, internal and external publicity and training, and public statements and visuals.
- d. “Protection” refers to measures that ensure safety and meet the needs of potential victims and survivors (e.g., clear processes, procedures, and infrastructure for reporting incidents and supporting victims).
- e. “Prosecution” refers specifically to disciplinary measures against (alleged) perpetrators, related investigative measures, and sanctions.
- f. “Provision” refers to the services offered to support victims, families, bystanders, whistleblowers, perpetrators, and affected members of the community, such as counselling and psychological and medical support. It also includes the training and support for the professionals who have to receive reports and deal with case handling.
- g. “Partnerships” relates to the involvement of relevant actors at all levels, such as governmental agencies, civil society organisations, trade unions, and staff and student associations.

4 .6. This Policy is part of a broader series of institutional actions directed at ... [In case the Institution has already related policies in place]

Article 5. Aims

5 .1. The aims of this Policy are to:

- a. Create a safe and inclusive environment for all members of the Institution
- b. Prevent all forms of gender-based violence
- c. Foster a culture of equality, respect, and non-discrimination
- d. Foster a culture where all forms of violence are taken seriously and are attended to
- e. Create systems that enable justice and support for victims/survivors
- f. Foster a culture where reporting is encouraged and supported, assuring victim/survivors that their complaints will be thoroughly investigated and responded to in accordance with institutional policy
- g. Ensure institutional accountability and legal compliance
- h. Ensure that sanctions are proportionate and equitable
- i. Support continuous data collection on gender-based violence incidents and the effectiveness of prevention and response efforts
- j. Engage bystanders and the community as a whole in preventing and responding to gender-based violence
- k. Ensure continuous improvement of policies, measures and tools adopted

Article 6. Relation to other internal policies

- 6.1. *This Policy shall apply in accordance with the following institutional policies: (... internal disciplinary policies for staff and students, policies on staff-student relationships, on professional boundaries, on social media policies, complain policies, etc)*
- 6.2. In matters not covered by this Policy, [...] shall apply. In the event of any conflict between [...] and this Policy, the provisions of this Policy shall prevail.

SECTION 3. SCOPE

Article 7. Personal jurisdiction

- 7.1. This Policy is applicable to all members of the Institution, including but not limited to [...], as defined in Article 3.

Article 8. Statute of limitations

- 8.1. Employees and Students may submit a formal report within *xx years after the incident*. In case of several incidents, *xx years after the last one*.
- 8.2. Former employees and alumni may submit a formal report *within xx years after the incident*, provided the incident occurred during their tenure or enrolment period with the institution. In case of several incidents, *xx years after the last one*.
- 8.3. Contractors, Externals, Others ... *within xx years after the incident*. In case of several incidents, *xx years after the last one*.
- 8.4. The Institution encourages the reporting of incidents as soon as possible after it has occurred. If a report is made a substantial amount of time after an incident, this may inhibit the institution's ability to gather evidence and/or take action.
- 8.5. *When a report is submitted the time limits in 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3, the Institution will (...how will the Institution acknowledge, record, validate the Reporting Party in these cases?)*

Article 9. Institutional Jurisdiction

- 9.1. This Policy applies to conduct within Institutional Premises, including buildings in use [...], as well as activities conducted through online platforms.
- 9.2. The provisions of this Policy also extend to activities associated with the Institution that occur beyond its premises as outlined in Article 3.1 (Definitions). Such activities include conferences, field trips, social gatherings on the occasion of institutional events, institutionally sponsored events, and any occasion connected to the Institution's research and educational missions.

SECTION 4. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Article 10. Definition of gender-based violence

- 10 .1. For the purpose of this Policy, gender-based violence is any type of harm that is perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their actual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. As stated in Article 4.2 (Violence as a continuum), gender-based violence occurs along a continuum, including both overt and subtle behaviours.
- 10 .2. A single act can constitute gender-based violence. It is not required that acts occur repeatedly for the misconduct to be reported and possibly sanctioned.

Article 11. Types of gender-based violence

- 11 .1. Gender-based violence can manifest through the following forms:

- a. **Physical violence:** use of physical force against another person or group including kicking, beating, pushing, slapping, shoving, hitting and blocking.
- b. **Psychological violence:** harmful behaviours that undermine, manipulate, or control a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions. This can include verbal abuse, threats, blackmail, controlling behaviour, and coercion, and can occur in both online and offline contexts. In an academic setting, psychological violence can manifest as public insults, ridiculing of someone's work, or humiliating a colleague in public.
- c. **Economic and financial violence:** acts or behaviours that result in financial or economic harm to an individual or make them financially dependent. This can include controlling financial resources, denying access to money or other resources, withholding support, withholding employment contracts, or not fulfilling economic responsibilities.
- d. **Sexual violence:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal, or physical behaviour of a sexual nature, including but not limited to sexual comments, jokes, innuendos, sexual invitations and demands, sextortion, sexual assault, sexual coercion, and rape. It can also take the form of "grooming" or boundary-blurring behaviours. This is a gradual process that someone in a position of power uses to manipulate someone to do things they may not be comfortable with and to make them less likely to reject or report abusive behaviour. Sexual harassment is considered a specific form of sexual violence, and is defined as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that, because of its severity and/or persistence:
 - is likely to violate another person's dignity;
 - has the purpose or effect of creating an offensive, degrading, intimidating, or hostile environment; and/or
 - has the purpose or effect of interfering significantly with an individual's ability to participate in, and/or benefit from, their educational or working environment by negatively affecting the person physically and/or emotionally. Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when studying or employment decisions are based on acceptance or rejection of unwelcome sexual behaviour.

- e. **Gender harassment:** unwelcome behaviours, actions or comments that create a hostile or offensive environment and are directed towards an individual or a group based on their sex, gender identity or gender expression. These behaviours are not necessarily sexually explicit, but rather can include derogatory or degrading remarks, sexist jokes, microaggressions, exclusion, silencing, stereotypical prejudices or other forms of demeaning treatment that belittle or marginalise individuals based on their gender.
 - f. **Organisational violence:** manifestation of gender-based violence at the collective, group, and organisational levels. This can take various forms, such as weak or autocratic management that allows or condones individual gender-based violence or the existence of group/organisational cultures that directly or indirectly promote gender-based violence, including hostile environments and psychological violence.
- 11 .2. All forms of gender-based violence can occur both in person and through the use of information and communication technologies, including social media, email, text messages, and online forums. This includes, but is not limited to, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, and the non-consensual distribution of sexual images and text.

11 .3. *Examples of gender-based violence may include, but are not limited to the following:*
...

Article 12. Intent

- 12 .1. The intention of the alleged perpetrator does not determine whether gender-based violence has occurred.
- 12 .2. The acceptance of any form of gender-based violence by others or its previous normalisation in the work and educational environment is irrelevant.

Article 13. Sexual consent

- 13 .1. For the purposes of sexual violence as defined in this Policy, consent is an ongoing, mutual, explicit and freely given agreement to take part in sexual activity. Freely given consent means that nobody has been coerced, intentionally misled, forced or pressured, is unconscious, is a minor, or is under excessive intoxication by drugs and/or alcohol.
- 13 .2. The Reporting Party is not required to have explicitly expressed that the behaviour was unwelcome for it to be classified as gender-based violence.
- 13 .3. Being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other substances is not an excuse for or defence to gender-based violence.

SECTION 5. CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Article 14. Duties

- 14 .1. **Institutional.** The Institution holds the following responsibilities and duties:

- a. Duty of care. The Institution has the legal and ethical obligation to ensure the safety, well-being, and rights of all members of its community. This duty encompasses several responsibilities and actions aimed at preventing, addressing, and responding to instances of gender-based violence effectively and attentively, such as:
 - Making necessary resources available for the effective implementation of this Policy
 - Formally documenting all reports and taking appropriate action
- b. *Liaising with Student Unions/Workers Unions/Works Council. The Institution will strive to carry out coordinated efforts with Student Unions/Workers Unions/Works Council in the implementation of this Policy.*

14 .2. **Managerial.** The responsibilities and duties of Heads of Units, Departments or Team Leaders include:

- a. Creating a safe environment for studying and working, as an inherent part of their role.
- b. Taking immediate and appropriate action upon witnessing or becoming aware of any instance of gender-based violence. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Promptly reporting the incident to the appropriate institutional authorities or designated personnel.
 - Intervening to stop the behaviour when it is safe to do so.
 - Providing support to the affected individual and ensuring they are aware of available resources and reporting mechanisms.

14 .3. **Individual.** All members of the Institution are expected to familiarise themselves with this Policy. They have a personal responsibility to comply with this Policy and demonstrate active commitment to this Policy by:

- a. Treating others with dignity and respect.
- b. Discouraging any form of gender-based violence by making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable.
- c. Supporting any member of the Institution who feels they are or have been subject to gender-based violence, including supporting them in reporting where they witness it and in making a formal report if appropriate.
- d. Attending available training sessions on gender-based violence to understand the nature of gender-based violence, its impact, and how to prevent it.
- e. Support the Institution's efforts in addressing gender-based violence by providing feedback on its policies and measures.

Article 15. Conflict of interest and abuse of power

- 15.1. *The Institution strongly discourages faculty-student and supervisor-supervisee sexual and/or romantic relationships due to the inherent power imbalance, which significantly increases the risk of abuse of power and gender-based violence, and undermines the validity of consent as defined in Art 13 (Sexual consent). The responsibility for maintaining safe and professional boundaries always rests with the person at the higher rank.*
- 15.2. *Sexual and/or romantic relationships between consenting adults within the Institution's community are generally considered private matters beyond the Institution's legitimate interests. However, when such involvement occurs between members in a dependency relationship — such as between faculty and students, or supervisors and supervisees — the significant power imbalance raises concerns about coercion, fairness, and conflicts of interest. This undermines the integrity of academic and professional decisions, thereby affecting the Institution's interests.*
- 15.3. In every case of sexual and/or romantic involvement between community members in a dependency relationship, the academic or teaching staff member or supervisor must disclose the situation to their own supervisor and should ensure that they never evaluate the work performance of their current or former sexual or romantic partners. When an academic staff member or supervisor discloses a conflict of interest, they are required to supply only as much information as necessary to enable their supervisor to take the steps outlined in Art 15.4 (Ways to eliminate conflicts of interest). The discussion needs not go into the character of personal relations. It needs only to establish that a personal relationship exists, and that it thereby gives rise to a conflict of interest. The discussion is confidential and will not be relayed to other members of the Institutional Community except as may be required for decision-making in order to prevent a conflict of interest.
- 15.4. Ways to eliminate conflicts of interest shall include, but are not limited to, transfer of supervisory, decision-making, oversight, evaluative, or advisory responsibilities to another member of the Institution or team of the Institution or, when necessary, to an external entity.
- 15.5. If the academic or teaching staff member or supervisor fails to take the above steps and a conflict of interest is created, this will be a violation of the present Policy and subject to disciplinary sanctions.

SECTION 6. REPORTING MECHANISMS

Article 16. Anonymous reporting

- 16.1. Anonymous disclosures allow individuals to report instances of gender-based violence without revealing their identity, helping the Institution recognise patterns of gender-based violence and take measures, if appropriate. These disclosures will be addressed and monitored by *[person/committee in charge]*

16 .2. Without disclosing their own name, the person making the disclosure should *[description of reporting channels, i.e. fill out a form, institutional app, etc.]* identifying the nature of the alleged conduct and providing evidence if available. They may also choose to identify the person/people alleged to have carried out this behaviour.

16 .3. Witnesses/bystanders/third parties are strongly encouraged to file anonymous reports.

Article 17. Institutional responses to anonymous reports

17 .1. *[Description and duties of the body in charge of dealing with anonymous reports, i.e., Ombuds, Case manager, etc.]*

17 .2. *University-instigated investigations may be triggered by, among others:*

- a. In instances of apparent severe and/or continued misconduct*
- b. Certain number of reports filed against the same person*
- c. When strong evidence is provided indicating a high probability of the reported incident*

17 .3. *in discussion with the relevant manager/supervisor, other actions may be taken such as training or awareness-raising measures, or targeted, documented conversations with named individuals.*

Article 18. Informal reports

18 .1. An informal report is meant to *[objective of this report mechanism]*. As such, it does not result in investigative procedures or disciplinary sanctions. A Reporting Party can make an informal report if they do not want to immediately initiate a formal investigative procedure.

18 .2. To submit an informal report, the Reporting Party must *[description of reporting channels, i.e. fill out a form, institutional app, etc.]*

18 .3. When an individual submits an informal report, they may request precautionary measures.

18 .4. Submission of an anonymous disclosure and/or an informal report does not preclude the submission of a formal report in the future.

Article 19. Institutional responses to informal reports

19 .1. *[Description and duties of the body in charge of dealing with informal reports, i.e., Ombuds, Case manager, etc.]*

19 .2. *An informal resolution might involve several approaches, including: issuing verbal cautions or warnings to the Respondent Party about the inappropriateness of certain behaviour, implementing behavioural monitoring agreements between the Respondent and their supervisor, the Respondent Party's supervisor or academic advisor being contacted to seek assistance in resolving the matter, [responsible body] engaging in discussions with those affected, referring the Respondent Party to relevant campus services, administrative or academic adjustments, such as modifying class schedules, changing sections, altering housing arrangements, or waiving fees, leave of absence, encouraging voluntary acts of contrition from the Respondent Party, such as apologising or providing service to the community, collaboratively agreeing on behavioural or institutional changes, participating in voluntary training, education, mentoring, or coaching.*

19 .3. *[Cases in which an informal resolution is not possible]*

Article 20. Formal reports

- 20 .1. Any member of the Institution can file a formal, official report with *[person/committee in charge]*. If found admissible according to Art. 25 on Admissibility, this will result in the initiation of a formal investigation based on the principles and procedures outlined in *this/institutional policy(-ies) in Art XX XX XX*.
- 20 .2. To submit formal report, the Reporting Party shall *[description of reporting channels, i.e., in paper, online]*. *Support for the Reporting Party will be provided by different staff members at the Institution.*
- 20 .3. When an individual submits a formal report, they may request precautionary measures.
- 20 .4. *[Description and duties of the body in charge of dealing with formal reports, i.e., Disciplinary Committee, etc., rotation, selection]*.

Article 21. Relation to law enforcement

- 21 .1. In addition to reporting a case of gender-based violence to the Institution, victims/survivors or bystanders may also file formal reports with law enforcement authorities. Disciplinary proceedings within the institution aim to uphold internal institutional rules. Therefore, unless the law enforcement authorities specifically instruct the Institution to pause its investigation, internal proceedings will continue without interruption.
- 21 .2. The Institution shall ensure that the Reporting Party understands the difference between criminal and/or civil investigations/proceedings and institutional disciplinary investigations/proceedings.
- 21 .3. *According to [...national law...] [a person, a professional, ...] who become aware of potential crimes, are required to report such situations to the law enforcement authorities.*

- 21 .4. *What kind of support can the Institution provide to Reporting Parties and Respondent Parties in this process? For example, information, guidance, etc.*
- 21 .5. *Listing and description of the Institution's acting principles when dealing with disciplinary matters which may constitute criminal offences. For example, the Institution shall adhere to any court order issued by the local judiciary.*
- 21 .6. *Beyond national legal requirements, can/should the Institution report an alleged crime to the police? What are its interests? Could it do so contrary to the wishes of the victim/survivor?*

SECTION 7. PROTECTION AND PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Article 22. Confidentiality

- 22 .1. All individuals participating in any part of a gender-based violence allegation are expected to maintain strict confidentiality regarding the issue, unless disclosure is mandated by this Policy or by law. Information will only be shared as legally required and as necessary and permitted under this Policy for the investigation and resolution of any claims.
- 22 .2. Parties are exempt from the confidentiality obligation in the context of seeking support from health and mental health professionals, and legal counsel.
- 22 .3. The Reporting Party (and, if applicable, the individual who experienced the alleged act of gender-based violence) may request confidentiality at any time during an informal or formal proceeding. This request indicates that the Party does not want their identity disclosed to the Respondent Party and/or the witnesses.
- 22 .4. The Institution will make all reasonable attempts to comply with this request and will inform the Complainant if this is not feasible, the limitations it might impose on certain courses of action and discuss their options on how to proceed with the case.

Article 23. Protection against retaliation

- 23 .1. The Institution strictly prohibits any form of victimisation or retaliatory conduct. This behaviour constitutes a severe breach of this Policy, subject to disciplinary proceedings under *institutional policies*.
- 23 .2. The Institution will regard as victimisation or retaliation any instance where a person is subjected to detrimental treatment because they have, in good faith:
- made an allegation of harassment, or
 - indicated an intention to make such an allegation, or
 - assisted or supported another person in bringing forward such an allegation, or
 - participated in an investigation of a report, or
 - participated in any disciplinary hearing arising from an investigation, or
 - f.* taken any other steps in connection with this Policy, or ...

g. ... are suspected of having done so

23 .3. Protection against retaliation for victims/survivors

23 .4. For witnesses and whistleblowers

23 .5. For those handling reports

Article 24. Precautionary measures.

24 .1. Risk assessment

24 .2. The aim of precautionary measures is to protect all involved parties and community members (such as bystanders, whistleblowers, trusted persons) affected by informal or formal proceedings.

24 .3. Precautionary measures shall be reasonable and proportionate.

24 .4. Precautionary measures are applicable in the context of which proceeding?

24 .5. Who imposes them?

24 .6. Are precautionary measures taken at the request of a party or can they be taken ex officio? Why?

24 .7. These measures must be notified to the “affected party” (normally the Respondent Party) in the event that the measures have a direct effect on their rights, and they must be given the possibility to contest and appeal: timeframe to do so, before whom and how. The appeal should have no suspensive or dilatory effect on the investigative proceedings.

24 .8. Examples of precautionary measures. We can distinguish between measures imposed upon Students, Employees, and Others. We should include something along the lines of “... and any other temporary measures necessary to protect involved parties and community members potentially affected by the proceedings”

24 .9. If a disciplinary proceeding determines that no violation of this Policy has taken place, the Institution may, at its discretion, take actions to mitigate any immediate measures previously imposed. *This may include restoring privileges or status, and, with the consent of the person affected, informing impacted individuals of the findings.*

24 .10. Precautionary measures shall be reviewed regularly and adjusted as the case develops.

24 .11. Non-compliance with the imposed precautionary measures constitutes a breach of this Policy and subject to sanctions under *internal policies*.

SECTION 8. INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Article 25. Admissibility

- 25 .1. *[Person/committee in charge]* is responsible for deciding, within *[timeframe]* working days of receiving the report, whether the report is admissible. The only grounds for non-admissibility are:
- a. The statute of limitations has passed.
 - b. The report falls outside of institutional jurisdiction.
- 25 .2. No report shall be considered inadmissible due to a lack of evidence, given the Institution's duty of fact-finding as outlined in Article 27.2 (Duty of the Institution to gather evidence).
- 25 .3. Reasons for rejection shall be thoroughly justified and communicated in writing to the Reporting Party.
- 25 .4. In case the submission is rejected after the admissibility review, the Reporting Party may appeal this decision by *[description of procedure]*.

Article 26. Investigation Committee

- 26 .1. *Investigation Committee. Composition and designation: internal and/or external, mixed? Permanent or ad-hoc? Who oversees the investigation for cases involving students and/or staff? Who selects and appoints?* What is the exact role and mandate? Are conclusions decisive or is there another body that will decide on the final outcome?
- 26 .2. Criteria for selecting Investigation Committee members:
- a. In selecting members of the Investigation Committee, regard will be given to relevant gender and diversity considerations.
- 26 .3. The members of the Investigation Committee are neutral. The Institution shall ensure that they have no prior involvement in the incident or knowledge of the parties to maintain independence.
- 26 .4. The recusal or excusal of a member of the Investigation Committee will take place in the following cases:
- a. A member of the Committee who lodges a report, or against whom an allegation has been brought shall be subject to automatic recusal and shall be excused from all business of the Committee for the duration of that case.
 - b. Where the Reporting Party or the Respondent Party objects to the presence of a member of the Committee, the objection shall be brought to [...] before the beginning of the proceedings. The objection shall be decided upon by [...] If the objection is rejected, the case should then proceed according to the rules of procedure. If the objection is upheld, the challenged member shall be excused from the Committee for consideration of that case.

- c. Self-recusal. Members of the Investigation Committee must recuse themselves in cases where they may be involved in a potential conflict of interest or lack of impartiality. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of this Policy.

26 .5. All members of the Investigation Committee will receive mandatory training by the Institution in investigating gender-based violence reports before being appointed, ensuring that they are equipped to carry out an investigation from a victim-centred and trauma-informed perspective.

Article 27. General principles of the investigation.

The investigation shall abide by the following principles:

27 .1. Prima facie case and shifting the burden of proof.

- a. The burden of proof shall shift to the Responding Party once the Reporting Party establishes a prima facie case. A prima facie case is established when the Reporting Party provides facts from which it may be presumed that gender-based violence has taken place. To do this, the Reporting Party may provide an account of facts or any means of evidence, as listed in Article X, if available.
- b. The Institution ensures that the Reporting Party's statement will be given significant importance in determining whether a prima facie case has been made, and will be investigated and evaluated in accordance with institutional policy.
- c. Once a prima facie case has been established, it shall be for the Respondent Party to prove that there has been no breach of institutional policy regarding gender-based violence.

27 .2. Due to the nature of gender-based violence in research and higher education institutions, Reporting Partys may find it challenging to obtain the necessary evidence to substantiate their case. Therefore, it is the duty of the Institution to employ all necessary means to gather evidence pertinent to the substantiation of the report and investigation of the facts, regardless of what has been provided by the parties involved.

27 .3. The purpose of the investigation is to identify violations of institutional Policy, not criminal offenses, as the Institution lacks jurisdiction over criminal matters. The investigation seeks to establish if a violation of university policy has occurred, identify any such violations, and determine whether disciplinary action is recommended.

27 .4. The Investigation Committee shall seek only information that is relevant to fact-finding. The committee must avoid collecting information that is irrelevant, prejudicial, or not directly connected to the allegations, such as character testimonials, past unrelated experiences of abuse, suicide attempts, or personal health and wellbeing matters.

27 .5. *Plan the investigation thoroughly, considering who to speak to, what information is needed, and where to obtain it.*

- 27 .6. The Institution shall maintain communication with all parties throughout the handling of gender-based violence cases, sharing information where appropriate and lawful in accordance with data protection legislation. At the beginning of the procedures, the Parties involved shall receive an explanation on how their personal data will be handled and what information might be shared with them, in accordance with Article 35.8 (Privacy notice).
- 27 .7. *In sight of the institutional interest, investigations shall continue regardless of whether the victim/survivor and/or perpetrator is no longer affiliated with the Institution. While key parties leaving the Institution may affect the quality and quantity of evidence that is available, a judgement should be made on the basis of evidence that can be collected.*

Article 28. Evidence

- 28 .1. *Acceptable/unacceptable forms of evidence according to the different types of gender-based violence. (Screenshots, documents, outcry witnesses, memory log ...)*
- 28 .2. The alleged victim/survivor shall only be asked to give their testimony once, and it shall be appropriately recorded, to avoid re-traumatisation by requiring repeated recounting of their experiences. They have the right to add additional information to an original testimony at any time during the proceedings *until xx*. They also have the right to bring a support person with them to interviews and any hearing.
- 28 .3. Adjustments can be made to the disciplinary procedure to avoid re-traumatisation such as allowing testimony via video link, questioning Reporting Party and Respondent Party in separate hearings, etc.

Article 29. Decision

- 29 .1. **Standard of proof.** The standard of proof shall be "on the balance of probabilities", which means that the allegations are 'more likely than not' to have occurred, with due regard for the requirements of this Policy.
- 29 .2. *Institutional body in charge of decision-making. If different from the Investigation Committee, the same criteria and other considerations for appointment shall apply (Art 23).*
- 29 .3. *Voting and majorities*
- 29 .4. *Timeframe*
- 29 .5. *[The Committee ...]* shall determine whether there has been a violation of the policy or no violation of the policy. It is required to provide a justification for its findings in either case.

SECTION 9. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Article 30. Criteria and principles

- 30 .1. Any Student, Employee, *Contractor, External or Other* found to have violated this Policy by engaging in conduct constituting gender-based violence *investigated by [...]* will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
- 30 .2. Disciplinary measures shall be proportionate, just and progressive in relation to the severity of the behaviour and/or repeated misconduct despite warnings. Multiple or repeated incidents of misconduct are more serious than a single act, and previous findings will be taken into account when determining sanctions.
- 30 .3. *Specifications on how misconduct findings will affect future careers and roles within the institution, such as denial of promotions, certain positions or roles (such as supervisory roles or teaching positions) for a specified period.*

Article 31. Sanction types and progression

- 31 .1. *The Disciplinary Committee may impose any of the following sanctions upon Students ...*
- 31 .2. *The Disciplinary Committee may impose any of the following sanctions upon Employees ...*
- 31 .3. *The Disciplinary Committee may impose any of the following sanctions upon Contractors, Externals and Others ...*
- 31 .4. *Examples: Formal oral or written warnings, apology, temporary suspension, change of post or laboratory, community service, restorative/educational programs, psychological support, temporary ban on promotion, pay deductions, probation periods, dismissal (termination of employment or study).*
- 31 .5. The Disciplinary Committee may impose any of the sanctions provided in this Policy or other sanctions that are not listed but are available under the applicable legal regulations.

Article 32. Communication of outcomes and sanctions

- 32 .1. *Detail of how sanctions imposed on the Respondent Party are communicated to Reporting Partys as part of the disciplinary procedure. (For example: The decision shall be delivered in writing to the Parties concerned within the deadline of ...)*
- 32 .2. *Explanation of how information about outcomes, including sanctions, is communicated internally and externally (e.g., annual aggregate statistics).*

Article 33. Appeal process

- 33 .1. *Regulations on the possibility of appealing the final decision, who can appeal, how and to whom?*

Article 34. Remedies

- 34 .1. The Institution shall provide remedies to those affected by gender-based violence within the scope of institutional jurisdiction.
- a. For students, these remedies may include *academic remedies such as alternative grading methods, extension of deadlines, the opportunity to retake coursework without penalty; wellbeing remedies such as counselling, psychological support, ; financial remedies such as reinstating fees or cost incurred as a result of gender-based violence and the process of reporting it, or other appropriate measures.*
 - b. For employees, potential remedies include *promotion, reinstatement, back pay, paid leave during investigations, suspension of duties, psychological support counselling, or other relevant interventions.*
 - c. For Others, *remedies may include ...*
 - d. *Community remedies such as awareness-raising sessions for departments/units, student societies, or as requested by the Reporting Party.*

SECTION 10.RECORD KEEPING AND ACCESS RIGHTS

Article 35. Data Recording

- 35 .1. The data gathered by the Institution will be stored and processed in *[Centralised place of information]*. The Institution shall ensure that all written records are clear, accurate and appropriate.
- 35 .2. In case of **anonymous reports**, the following information will be recorded: *(account provided by the parties, etc.)*.
- 35 .3. Truly anonymous data is not personal data, and therefore falls outside of the data protection legislation's scope and can be held without triggering the application of the data protection legislation. [...] is responsible for removing any information that may lead to identification (or re-identification) of individuals.
- 35 .4. In case of **informal reports**, the following information will be recorded: *(resolution, etc.)*.
- 35 .5. In case of **formal reports**, the following information will be recorded: *(evidence gathered by the Investigation Committee following the principle of data minimisation, etc.)*.
- 35 .6. Any material obtained during an investigation of a gender-based violence case will be saved and stored by the Institution in accordance with the *EU General Data Protection Regulation, as well as the national legislation on Data Protection [can include name here]*.
- 35 .7. *Principle of data minimisation*

35 .8. The Institution shall inform those who wish to submit an anonymous, informal or formal report about what happens to the data during the entire process in the Privacy Notice.

a. Content of the Privacy Notice

35 .9. The period of retention time applicable to the different processes are...

35 .10. The Institution will comply with any order of release of information requested by law enforcement authorities.

Article 36. Access rights

36 .1. Access to full details of anonymous reports will be provided to:

a. Person and case

36 .2. Access to full details of informal reports will be provided to:

a. Person and case

36 .3. Access to full details of formal reports will be provided to:

a. Person and case

36 .4. In case a Data Subject Access Request is filed by the Respondent Party of an allegation of gender-based violence, the Institution will:

36 .5. In case a Data Subject Access Request is filed by the Reporting Party of an allegation of gender-based violence, the Institution will:

Article 37. Misconduct-disclosure scheme

SECTION 11. PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Article 38. Awareness raising on gender-based violence

38 .1. The Institution shall launch regular and systematic initiatives to raise awareness about gender-based violence in academia and promote a culture of zero tolerance, sending a clear message that gender-based violence is unacceptable in the Institution.

38 .2. Permanent informational resources on gender-based violence and support services shall be made available *on ...* The website URL and information on the location of these resources will be posted in a wide range of locations.

38 .3. Orientation sessions for all new employees and students shall provide information on how to recognise gender-based violence and the main features of this Policy, as well as information on how to file a report.

38 .4. Further examples of awareness-raising measures.

Article 39. Education and training

- 39.1. The Institution shall implement regular and systematic programmes to educate all members about the gender-based violence policy, consent, bystander intervention, and support resources, *among others*.
- 39.2. The Institution shall provide general ongoing trainings on gender-based violence, including bystander interventions, consent, *among others*, for Students and Employees, also available to *Contractors* and *Others* wherever possible.
- 39.3. Members of the *[Decision-making body in gender-based violence reports]* will receive mandatory tailored training on how to deal with gender-based violence reports. *This training should, as a minimum, cover:*
- a. ...
 - b. ...
- 39.4. Members of the *[Investigation Committee in gender-based violence reports]* will receive mandatory tailored training on how to conduct investigations from a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach. This training should, as a minimum, cover:
- a. ...
- 39.5. *Medical and psychological counselling personnel* will receive mandatory specific training on how to deal with those affected by gender-based violence. This training should, as a minimum, cover:
- a. ...
- 39.6. All staff involved in managing personal data in gender-based violence cases will receive appropriate training in data protection law, and in how to make and document such decisions.
- 39.7. *All trainings outlined in this clause will be carried out by competent professionals adhering to high quality standards.*
- 39.8. *Effectiveness-assessment of the provided trainings.*

SECTION 12. SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Article 40. Support services for involved parties

- 40.1. In furtherance of the Institution's commitment to fostering change in organisational culture and encouraging the reporting of gender-based violence, the Institution will provide assistance to victim/survivors in filing a report when needed. This support includes information, guidance and resources on the different reporting mechanisms and their implications.
- 40.2. The Institution shall *provide, whenever possible*, psychological counselling, medical, social, and legal services, as well as academic support, financial aid, and accommodation options for victims/survivors of gender-based violence occurred within the scope of institutional jurisdiction.

40 .3. The Institution shall also provide information to its members about external support services, such as dedicated staff, medical services, police, legal assistance, NGOs, groups and collectives working on gender-based violence and with survivors, and helplines.

40 .4. *For bystanders.*

40 .5. *For Respondent Parties.*

40 .6. Special consideration to all grounds for discrimination will be given when providing support services, such as disability status, language, ethnic and religious background, and others.

40 .7. The availability of the support resources described in this Article shall be publicised by the Institution *through ...*

Article 41. Support service for staff implementing gender-based violence policies

41 .1. The Institution acknowledges the emotional and mental demands of staff implementing gender-based violence policies, *particularly recognising ...*

41 .2. The Institution shall protect mental health and well-being of staff through *regular supervision, adequate resourcing, capacity building, adequate follow-up training, formal recognition of and fair compensation for their tasks and efforts.*

SECTION 13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Article 42. Regular reviews

42 .1. *[Person/body responsible]* shall conduct a community-wide anonymous survey on gender-based violence *experiences every xx years* to measure prevalence, detect populations at higher risk, satisfaction with institutional responses and services provided, and effectiveness of measures, among others. The survey shall incorporate an intersectional lens by collecting data on several identity categories of respondents such as gender, religion, age, class, (dis)ability, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

42 .2. In addition to these regular surveys, members of the community are encouraged to provide their feedback on case management procedures and support services at any time, and in particular after having used the services, by filling out the questionnaire on *[link]*.

42 .3. *[Responsible body]* issues gender-based violence reports *every xx years* based on:

- The survey and feedback mechanisms referred to in Art 42.1 (Anonymous survey) and 42.2 (Feedback on case management procedures).
- Anonymised data from records of reports and their resolutions.
- An assessment of Policy compliance with any updates in EU, regional and national legal requirements, internal policies, and external quality standards.

42.4. The gender-based violence reports are to be presented to the Institution's leadership and governance teams and made available to the public for discussion in the following fora/platforms: *[Academic Forum, website, ...]*.

42.5. The monitoring reports will include:

- a. Number and type of reports (anonymous, informal, formal).
- b. **Gender** and category of Reporting Party (student, alumni, staff, faculty etc.).
- c. Gender and category of Respondent Party.
- d. Type of gender-based violence.
- e. Time it took to reach resolution (if applicable).
- f. For informal reports: resolution adopted.
- g. For formal reports: outcome of investigation (breach found/not found), related sanctions.
- h. A qualitative analysis of case pathways to detect shortcomings and identify areas for improvement in institutional responses to gender-based violence.
- i. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the instruments referred to in Art 42.1 (Anonymous survey) and 42.2 (Feedback on case management procedures).
- j. A risk assessment, evaluating the potential for gender-based violence incidents to occur within the institution, identifying recurring institutional situations/constellations that made it possible for perpetrators to abuse their power, identifying vulnerable groups from an intersectional lens, and suggesting strategies to mitigate these risks.
- k. Detailed recommendations for revision and improvement of any aspects of this Policy and its implementation.
- l. An account of how gender-based violence issues connect with other issues under the common denominator of social safety.

SECTION 14. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Article 43. Policy accessibility and communication

- 43.1. All Employees and Students shall be informed of this Policy upon the commencement of their employment or enrolment, and sign in compliance as part of their study agreement or employment contract. Such acknowledgment shall be documented and retained for verification purposes.
- 43.2. The Institution will ensure that *External parties* are informed of this Policy by providing easily accessible copies in the local language and in English, including links to the electronic version in invitations to both academic and non-academic events, and ensuring the Policy is prominently displayed on premises and during activities.

- 43 .3. *To enforce the Policy with respect to Contractors' interactions with the Institution, the following provision must be incorporated into all contracts entered by any entity of the Institution with Contractors, Visitors and any Others: "Agent/Supplier declares to have received, read and understood the Policy on ..."*
- 43 .4. A user-friendly presentation, including graphical representations of steps and procedures, shall be included in the Annex of this Policy to ensure understanding by its target audience.
- 43 .5. This Policy and all related materials shall comply with accessibility standards, including but not limited to, providing documents in formats compatible with screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- 43 .6. In recognition of the challenges faced by foreign Students and Employees who may not be proficient in the local language, this Policy and associated materials shall be provided in the primary language(s) of the institution and in English.
- 43 .7. The Policy shall be prominently featured and easily locatable on Institutional Premises and on the institution's website.

SECTION 15. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Article 44. Budget

- 44 .1. The Institution shall allocate adequate resources to support prevention, reporting, response and monitoring activities related to gender-based violence. These resources shall include, but are not limited to, an earmarked budget line to cover the costs associated with:
- a. *Training*
 - m. *External expertise, when needed*
 - b. *xxx*

Article 45. Human resources

- 45 .1. *Position of Gender Equality Officer or similar in charge of Policy implementation.*
- 45 .2. *Ombudspeople*

Article 46. Recognition of voluntary work

- 46 .1. The Institution shall recognise and support any voluntary work performed by key implementers who contribute to gender-based violence prevention and response efforts, often motivated by their commitment to equality and activism.
- a. Support for employee voluntary work may include the provision of teaching waivers, additional time off, and awards for service to the community, as deemed appropriate by the Institution.

- b. Recognition of student voluntary work in the design and implementation of institutional policies related to gender-based violence may include awarding study credits and accommodating their academic schedules as necessary.

Article 47. Collaboration and partnerships

- 47 .1. **Internal partnerships.** The Institution shall engage with internal stakeholders, including representatives from staff and student associations, in the processes of designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating institutional policies and actions.
- 47 .2. Inter-institutional, mutual learning partnerships.
 - a. The Institution shall undertake joint actions to combat gender-based violence, leveraging collective efforts for a more significant impact through shared ideas and collaborative initiatives with other institutions. This includes the joint development of protocols for the prevention, detection, attention, and remedy of gender-based violence cases within the Institutional community.
 - b. The institution shall engage I mutual learning by exchanging best practices, identifying areas for policy improvement, and addressing existing gaps with other institutions.
- 47 .3. **External partnerships.** Where internal expertise is inadequate, the institution shall engage with external entities, such as law enforcement agencies and healthcare providers. Collaboration with external organisations, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), legal authorities, and support services, shall be pursued to enhance the effectiveness of gender-based violence interventions.

SECTION 16.FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 48. Entry into force

- 48 .1. This Policy shall enter into force ...*

Article 49. Amendments

- 49 .1. Amendments to this Policy are to be approved by [...]*
- 49 .2. Date of entry into force and date of each amended version of the Policy shall be listed at the bottom of this document.


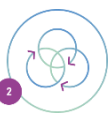



THE GenderSAFE PROJECT

The EU-funded GenderSAFE project promotes zero-tolerance for gender-based violence in the European Research Area and supports research and higher education institutions in establishing safe, inclusive and respectful environments by setting up comprehensive policies.

Gender-based violence is a persistent problem in higher education and research institutions across the European Research Area, with severe consequences at the individual, institutional and societal levels. Research from Horizon 2020 project UniSAFE shows that gender-based violence in this context is widespread but remains underreported, suggesting the permissiveness of violence in organisational cultures¹.

In recent years, policy attention to gender-based violence in higher education and research has grown at the EU level, as well as at the level of responsible national authorities and research performing organisations. Despite advances in policy adoption, institutions are however failing in implementation, and very little is in place to monitor and evaluate existing policies. There is also a lack of understanding of what constitutes gender-based violence and how to proceed when something happens.

Building on the insights and operational tools developed within UniSAFE, from 2024 to 2027 the GenderSAFE project aims to:

- 
Strengthen zero-tolerance policies: aiming to create a unified policy approach in the EU by incorporating the latest theoretical insights, focusing on power dynamics, intersectionality, mobility, and precarity.
- 
Support higher education and research institutions in improving and implementing existing policies: gathering stakeholders from various contexts to co-design and share zero-tolerance policies on gender-based violence, in line with the EU baseline code of conduct, fostering mutual learning and support.
- 
Build institutional capacities: training dedicated staff and a pool of trainers to help organisations develop and implement effective policies against gender-based violence.
- 
Monitor policies at national and institutional levels: developing tools to gather and monitor comprehensive data on how zero-tolerance policies are adopted and implemented across the EU, creating a valuable resource for future efforts.
- 
Raise awareness and advocate: advocating for decision and policy-makers to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence and engaging stakeholders to take up our outputs.

Find out more: <https://gendersafe.eu>

¹ UniSAFE consortium. (2024). UniSAFE Policy Brief 2: Addressing gender-based violence in higher education and research through institutional change. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10605043>