



UniSAFE
ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Setting up a
comprehensive policy
framework addressing
gender-based violence in
academia: A step-by-step
guide**



Setting up a comprehensive policy framework addressing gender-based violence in academia: A step-by-step guide

This document is part of a toolkit developed under the UniSAFE Project “ Gender-based violence and institutional responses: Building a knowledge base and operational tools to make universities and research organisations safe”

Find out more: <https://unisafe-gbv.eu>

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
What is an Action Plan and how to use this Guidance document?	2
Step 1: Getting started	3
Step 2: Analysing and assessing the state of play and context in the institution	6
Step 3: Designing the Action Plan	6
Step 4: Implementation	8
Step 5: Monitoring and evaluation	8
Template	9

What is an Action Plan and how to use this Guidance document?

An Action Plan is a detailed document that outlines the steps and actions necessary to achieve a specific goal or objective. In the context of implementing a comprehensive policy framework combatting gender-based violence in academia, an Action Plan would be a roadmap that provides a clear and detailed plan of actions for how to design, implement, enforce, monitor and evaluate the plan. It should be comprehensive, realistic, and flexible, with clear goals, roles, timelines, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure its success.

This guidance is particularly helpful for those who are at the beginning stages of creating and implementing a policy framework to combat gender-based violence. It offers an excellent starting point with clear and easy-to-understand instructions, and practical tips to help you design, implement, monitor and evaluate your plan.

Important

The Action Plan is not meant to be a stand-alone document, but rather to serve as a working tool. The aim is to integrate measures relating to gender-based violence into the broader policies and practices of the organisation to ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to addressing gender-based violence.



STEP 1: Getting started

As a first step, set up the working group for the Action Plan. The working group will be responsible for undertaking the **design, coordinating and overseeing the implementation, enforcement, and monitoring and evaluation** of the Plan. The team can be composed of academic and administrative staff. In this guidance, this team will be referred to as coordinating team.

Tip: Locate the coordinating team close to the top management or high in the institutional hierarchy. This ensures that the team has the necessary authority and access to resources needed to carry out its responsibilities effectively. It also demonstrates the organisation's commitment to combat gender-based violence, which can help generate additional support from other members.



STEP 2: Analysing and assessing the state of play and context in the institution

The analysis and assessment of the state of play and context of the institution are very important for the design of actions. This step aims to support you in understanding the organisation's **structure, culture, governance and status quo**. This can help identify potential **challenges, gatekeepers or resistances** to the implementation and determine how to address them. A comprehensive assessment aims to capture:

Organisational culture:

The culture, formal and informal values, and people's lived experiences within an organisation will impact on how the plan is received and implemented. Understanding the culture can help identify potential barriers or challenges that may arise during the implementation process. You can use the "Checklist of Key Questions for an Organisational Analysis for Introducing Gender Mainstreaming", [available here](#).

Relevant legislation and policies in your institution and country

- Start by investigating the legal background and framework at your institution and at national level. A good understanding of the legal framework as well as existing measures will allow you to support your rationale for the measures suggested. Use the [interactive map](#) of laws and policies addressing gender-based violence designed by UniSAFE, and identify your national report from the analyses carried out in 33 countries.
- Keep track of any measures, policies, and practices implemented internally and note whether these are aligned with the national and European legislation.
- Identify any gaps or weaknesses and clearly map the procedures that are followed for the application of the policies, including the responsible actors.
- Consider collecting insights from the direct stakeholders on whether they are aware of the measures and practices, and whether these are implemented efficiently. Identify any shortcomings in the existing practices.

Prevalence of gender-based violence

The collection of data on incidents of any form of gender-based violence that occurred in the institution allows you to form an approximate idea of the scale of the problem and contributes to evidence-based policymaking. This can be implemented via the collection of data from specific surveys, existing surveys that run on a regular basis (like surveys on staff well-being, students' satisfaction), or through administrative data (reports on formal and informal complaints).

The goal of this step is to:

- Identify where the data on gender-based violence is located and who is responsible for collecting, analysing, and monitoring it.
- Establish a clear and efficient process for data collection and analysis.

Get inspired from practices on how to organise data collection and analysis to support the institutional efforts towards gender equality ([GEARING-Roles webinar on Gender Information Management Systems to support structural GEP work: learning from others](#)).

By collecting and analysing this data, institutions can gain a better understanding of the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence within their organisation, and use this information to inform evidence-based policy-making to address and prevent it. If institutional data is not readily available, consider referring to existing data, such as the UniSAFE survey or other surveys. Remember, the lack of data shouldn't be a reason for not developing an Action Plan.

Tip: Keep in mind that an intersectional approach is necessary. Therefore, when collecting data, consider other socio-demographic categories such as ethnicity and origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, as well as people's function within the organisation.

Stakeholders' analysis and needs assessment

The stakeholders' analysis and needs assessment can help you identify the key stakeholders who may affect or be affected by the policy framework, such as students, faculty members, technical staff, administrators, and top management, as well as external ones such as government bodies, community organisations, NGOs, and advocacy groups. The aim is to identify their needs, concerns, interests as well as the level of influence that will affect the design of the plan.

The stakeholder analysis could be conducted through surveys, interviews, or focus groups, and should be informed by an intersectional lens that recognises the diverse identities and experiences of stakeholders.

The information gathered through the stakeholder analysis is subsequently used to develop a stakeholder engagement plan that outlines how each group will be engaged, which roles they will take up, what information they will be provided with, and how their feedback will be incorporated into the policy framework.

To help you map the different internal and external stakeholders, find a practical tool from the SUPERA project, the stakeholder mapping technique, [available here](#).

Available resources

Assess the existence of any kind of resources that can support the Action Plan, such as expertise (related to gender equality and gender-based violence) and funding (for implementing training, awareness-raising, support services, internal and external collaborations, communication tools, etc.). It is suggested to assess the internal expertise and other resources before establishing external collaborations and partnerships.

Impact drivers on gender equality and gender-based violence

Important factors for effective implementation are: top management leadership, a context favourable to the recognition of gender-based violence and a political willingness to confront the problem, as well as specific gender and gender-based violence expertise among the units responsible for the policy implementation.

Importantly, the above analysis should take into consideration the 7P model, as presented in the UniSAFE Toolkit.



STEP 3: Designing the Action Plan

In order to move forward, it is crucial to use the analysis conducted in Step 2 and determine which areas require intervention, following UniSAFE's 7Ps framework (Prevalence, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Provision of Services, Partnerships and Policies). It is essential to involve the stakeholders identified in Step 2 in the development of the Plan's actions through co-creation. The following factors should be considered:



Goals & Objectives: Develop clear and measurable goals and objectives for the Action Plan taking into account the findings of the needs assessment, tackling all Ps.



Actions & Targets: Design the specific actions and tasks in order to achieve the goals and objectives. Consider designing actions for each thematic of the 7P Framework. Some actions and tasks may tackle more than one P. Set specific targets for each action.



Time plan: Create a clear timeline for each action item, specifying the deadline for its completion. It is important to note that some actions may not have a specific end date as they need to continue on an ongoing basis without any conditions.



Responsible parties: Define the responsible bodies and functions for implementing the actions.



Set measurable indicators: For each action and task, set measurable indicators including qualitative and quantitative ones. Such indicators promote accountability for the responsible parties and will support the monitoring and evaluation process in Step 5.



Get inspired: Get inspired by good practices implemented by other organisations and assess the context in which they were carried out before replicating them. Adapt these practices based on the assessment conducted.

When drafting the Action Plan, it is suggested to dedicate a section to the presentation of the scope, mission and values of the organisation. References to previous initiatives, as well as documents and policies related to the Action Plan, are important to be highlighted. Similarly, the results of the internal assessment can also be presented briefly.



STEP 4: Implementation

Stage 4 is about implementing the Action Plan by mobilising the responsible actors. The coordination team has to be in touch regularly to oversee the implementation of activities, detecting any obstacles, as well as for monitoring the progress. Keep an eye on windows of opportunities as well as resistance that may arise and be open to refining aspects of the plan, if needed.

At this stage, it is important to develop a communication and outreach plan to raise awareness about the policy framework and its importance, and to engage stakeholders and influential partners.

It is crucial to actively involve all stakeholders identified and promote a horizontal sense of ownership across the different institutional services and departments. The working group should aim to have an overview of the ongoing activities and act as the focal point for coordination, rather than being responsible for every aspect of the Action Plan. By involving all stakeholders and promoting ownership, the Action Plan is more likely to be successful, as it will benefit from a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and expertise.



Step 5: Monitoring and evaluation

Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Action Plan to ensure that progress is being made and to identify any areas that may need improvement. Use the indicators defined in Stage 2 and conduct the monitoring and evaluation process at least once a year. Find more information on monitoring and evaluation in the “Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR)” Tool, available [here](#).

In summary, monitoring and evaluation are essential steps in the Action Plan as they ensure that the policy framework remains effective and responsive to the institution's needs and goals. By tracking progress and assessing outcomes, the coordinating team can identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to ensure the policy framework's continued success. Furthermore, providing evidence of the effectiveness of efforts undertaken will support their legitimisation and sustainability.

Template

[Introduction of the Organisation: scope, mission, values]

[Assessment Report (not mandatory)]

[What is the aim of this Action Plan?]

Action Plan Template

Thematic area: <i>Prevention</i>					
Main issues / Problems identified:	(Describe the challenges and weaknesses identified in relation to [Thematic Area], as identified in Stage 2)				
Goals:	e.g., The goal is to design a comprehensive prevention strategy that aims: 1) to create awareness for students and academic & admin staff on the different forms of gender-based violence, and the available services offered at the institution and, 2) design an educational programme for bystanders and build a network of at least 50 across the different functions of the university.				
Actions	Responsible body	Timeline	Target	Indicators	Resources Required
Bystander Intervention Training programme for postgraduate students	EDI office & Human Resources	December 2023	At least 50 students attend all the series of workshops	Indicators	Trainer/ Facilitator; HR Budget

*Template by SUPERA (Supporting the Promotion of Equality in Research and Academia, No.787829) "Template for Gender Equality Plan".

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