



Policy Briefs

WP6 – Communication and dissemination

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Consortium

No	List of partners	Acronym	Country
1	University of Alicante	UA	ES
2	Centro studi e iniziative europeo	CESIE ETS	IT
3	University of Maia	UMAIA	PT
4	APLICA Investigación y traslación Soc. Coop.	APLICA	ES
5	Adam Mickiewicz University	AMU	PL
6	University of Applied Sciences Burgenland	UASB	AUT
7	University of Verona	UNIVR	IT
8	University of Antwerp	UANTWERP	BEL



Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
GBV	Gender-based Violence
SH	Sexual harassment
OSH	Online Sexual Harassment
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
AI	Artificial Intelligence

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Executive summary

The present deliverable presents policy briefs developed by the partnership to support European universities in strengthening their readiness to prevent and respond to online and offline sexual harassment (SH) through an equity-based approach.

The policy briefs derive from the project's efforts and research, partnership experience, and good practices and offer concrete, actionable recommendations for higher education institutions.

The full policy briefs are hosted on the University of Alicante (project coordinator) website and are accessible through the links provided in this document. This deliverable offers a concise overview of their scope, target audience, and key recommendations.

1. Introduction

The goal of the Uni4Equity project is to strengthen the ability of universities to identify, map and respond to on-line and off-line SH at workplace and other relevant settings (classrooms, digital space), with an explicit (but not exclusive) focus on minority social groups.

More specifically, it is aimed to:

1. Reinforce universities teams, networks, and units in charge of gender equality issues through structural reforms, improved work processes and the engagement of key stakeholders for the prevention of SH;
2. Promote mutual learning and exchange of good practices to identify and tackle SH at the university among different target groups;
3. Increase the social awareness about the importance of rejecting all forms of SH and the need to contribute to its prevention among university members;
4. Improve the skills and the capacity of professionals and the availability of tools and resources to address and follow-up on SH;

5. Reduce the risk factors of exposure to SH at different levels of relationships (interpersonal, institutional and social) for different university target groups, including minority social groups;
6. Minimize the impacts that SH may have on victims;
7. Contribute to the acknowledge of the universities as an asset to prevent and response this problem;
8. Address and prevent SH at universities as a priority issue for gender equality promotion.

Enhancing these aims requires an ecological approach that integrates strategies at different levels of prevention (primary, secondary and tertiary). The main target group of the project are students, teachers and administrative staff at the university, including social minority groups.

A multi-agency cooperation between universities and other relevant social actors is proposed to promote these changes through a mixed-method participative methodology.

2. Objectives of the policy briefs

The policy briefs aim to:

- Provide universities with clear, evidence-informed policy recommendations;
- Promote an equity and intersectional approach to addressing SH;
- Support institutional capacity-building and cultural change.

3. Target audience

The primary target audience includes:

- Policy makers, government officials, legislators, and administrators;
- University leadership and management;
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) units;
- Human resources and student services;

- Academic and administrative staff involved in policy design and implementation.

Secondary audiences include quality assurance bodies, other stakeholders in the higher education sector and wider public.

4. Work organisation

The partnership prepared **five policy briefs** that provide recommendations, that derive from the project's research and activities.

Across all policy briefs, the partnership emphasises the following guidelines:

- Be clear, concise, and engaging;
- Start with an executive summary (key points and recommendations);
- Define the problem with supporting evidence (research, data, case studies);
- Offer concrete recommendations tailored to university decision-makers;
- Use accessible language with practical examples;
- Include infographics, statistics or short case studies;
- End with a call to action and references.

The policy briefs reflect the added value of transnational collaboration, combining diverse institutional contexts and expertise. They offer adaptable recommendations that can be tailored to different university systems while maintaining a shared commitment to equity and inclusion.

Three policy briefs, prepared by the partnership, are available in English and in all partners' national languages – Spanish, Portuguese, German, Italian, Polish and Flemish.

They are disseminated electronically through the coordinator's website and partner channels to ensure wide accessibility across Europe.

Two additional policy briefs were prepared by the consortium in English.

5. Overview of the policy briefs

That Uni4Equity consortium prepared five policy briefs based on the results of the project. Three of them are available on the University of Alicante website's project page both in English and in all of the partner languages - Spanish, Portuguese, German, Italian, Polish and Flemish. And the other two are available in English. All of them are available here: <https://web.ua.es/en/unidad-igualdad/repository.html>.

Policy brief 1: Institutional readiness for addressing and responding to sexual harassment in Higher Education.

Main Authors: Katrien Schaubroeck, Sofie Avery, Anneleen De Cuyper, Marina Berbegal-Bernabeu, Sylwia Jaskulska, Barbara Jankowiak, Mafalda Sousa, Carmen Vives-Cases.

Reviewers: Maryna Manchenko, Marlies Wallner, Iwona Chmura-Rutkowska, Katarzyna Waszynska.

Focus: Institutional readiness to prevent, detect, and respond to SH in higher education, with a focus on structural, cultural, and organisational factors shaping how universities address SH. The brief covers prevalence, key challenges, best practices, and policy recommendations structured across primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

Key issues addressed:

- Lack of information and visibility. Insufficient awareness among students and staff about what constitutes SH, available support services, and reporting procedures;
- Low reporting. High prevalence of SH combined with very low formal reporting, driven by uncertainty, normalization of behaviours, and lack of recognition;
- Inequality and heightened risk for specific groups. Women, LGBTIQIA+ people, younger university members, people with disabilities, and socio-economically vulnerable groups face higher exposure to SH;
- Harmful institutional responses. Risks of secondary victimisation, victim-blaming, lack of confidentiality, repeated retelling of traumatic experiences, and institutional betrayal within formal support systems;

- Fragmented and insufficient institutional frameworks. Absence of coordinated, trauma-informed, and survivor-centred protocols across universities.

Key recommendations:

- Adopt a comprehensive, institution-wide sexual harassment protocol, clearly define SH, scope, rights and responsibilities, reporting procedures, and sanctions, using an inclusive and intersectional approach;
- Strengthen primary prevention through awareness and education. Implement mandatory training, continuous awareness campaigns, and a centralised, accessible website providing clear information, definitions, and resources;
- Improve access to reporting and early support (secondary prevention). Ensure multiple, confidential, accessible reporting channels; train staff and bystanders; and provide targeted support for high-risk groups;
- Implement survivor-centred and trauma-informed responses (tertiary prevention). Avoid re-traumatisation, ensure confidentiality, provide coordinated case management, continuous communication, and access to psychological and legal support;
- Ensure monitoring, accountability, and continuous improvement. Systematically evaluate policies, publish anonymised data and reports, strengthen external oversight, and integrate sanctions with reparative and restorative measures.

Policy Brief 2: Addressing online sexual harassment in European Higher Education Institutions: evidence-based policy recommendations from the Uni4Equity project.

Main Authors: Sofia Neves, Mafalda Sousa.

Contributing Authors: Joana Topa, Estefânia Silva, Janete Borges, Mafalda Ferreira, Emarete Santos, Barbara Jankowiak, Sylwia Jaskulska, Carmen Vives-Cases.

Reviewers: José Miguel Carrasco, Aitana Muñoz Haba, Marlies Wallner, Maryna Manchenko, Iwona Chmura-Rutkowska.

Focus: Online sexual harassment (OSH) in European higher education institutions (HEIs), addressing its prevalence, forms, impacts, and institutional capacity to prevent, detect, and respond. The brief focuses on OSH as a distinct but interconnected phenomenon with in-person

SH, shaped by digital environments, anonymity, and emerging technologies such as AI (Artificial Intelligence) and deepfakes, and frames responses within human rights and public health approaches across three prevention levels.

Key issues addressed:

- Significant prevalence of OSH in HEIs. One in six university members experienced at least one form of OSH, with higher exposure among women and non-binary people;
- Low institutional reporting and reliance on informal support. Very limited use of HEIs' internal services and police reporting, with most victims turning to family and friends;
- Limited institutional capacity to identify and manage OSH. Difficulties in detecting OSH, especially when it occurs outside institutional platforms or involves anonymous perpetrators;
- Gendered and intersectional inequalities. Women and non-binary people face higher risks, requiring intersectional assessment and tailored interventions;
- Technological challenges and AI-related risks. Use of AI tools (e.g. deepfakes, fake nudes) intensifies harm, complicates accountability, and exceeds current institutional expertise;
- Ongoing revictimisation and lasting harm. The permanence and shareability of digital content expose victims to repeated harm, trauma, and reputational damage.

Key recommendations:

- Implement a global institutional strategy distinguishing OSH from IPSH. Develop a comprehensive framework for preventing and combating gender-based and sexual violence that explicitly addresses OSH's specific dynamics;
- Strengthen primary prevention through mapping, digital literacy, and awareness. Systematically assess OSH prevalence, integrate IT and Data Security Units into prevention strategies, and promote campus-wide awareness and digital safety campaigns;
- Improve early detection and reporting mechanisms (secondary prevention). Ensure accessible, inclusive, and user-friendly reporting systems; deploy digital support tools; communicate policies clearly; and implement bystander intervention and targeted measures for high-risk groups;

- Provide trauma-informed support and accountability (tertiary prevention). Offer specialised psychological services for victims, strengthen staff and student capacities to respond to OSH, and ensure structured accountability and rehabilitative measures for perpetrators;
- Leverage technology responsibly. Use AI tools to support monitoring, early detection, victim assistance, and pattern recognition, while safeguarding privacy and data protection.

Submitted to: [Sexuality Research and Social Policy](#) (as Neves, S., Sousa, M., Topa, J., Silva, E., Borges, J., Ferreira, M., Santos, E., Jankowiak, B., Jaskulska, S., Carrasco, J. M., Muñoz Haba, A., Wallner, M., Manchenko, M., Chmura-Rutkowska, I., & Vives-Cases, C. (submitted). Online sexual harassment in European Universities: Policy recommendations).)

Policy Brief 3: Equity-centered approaches to sexual harassment prevention in European universities.

Main Authors: Carmen Vives-Cases, Marina Berbegal-Bernabeu, Esther Ríos-Albert, Ariadna Cerdán-Torregrosa.

Contributing Authors: Barbara Jankowiak, Sylwia Jaskulska, Sofia Neves, Mafalda Sousa, Joana Topa, Estefânia Silva.

Reviewers: Emily Felt, José Miguel-Carrasco, Aitana Muñoz-Haba, Marlies Wallner, Iwona Chmura-Rutkowska, Maryna Manchenko, Iwetta Andruszkiewicz, Katarzyna Waszyńska.

Focus: Equity-centered prevention of SH in European universities, addressing how social inequalities, power hierarchies, and institutional cultures shape risk, reporting, access to support, and outcomes. The brief applies intersectional and gender-transformative approaches to strengthen universities' capacity to prevent SH, ensure equitable access to support, and protect those most affected.

Key issues addressed:

- Unequal risk of SH driven by social inequalities. Women, LGBTQIA+ people, young university members, people with disabilities, international students, and those in precarious positions face significantly higher risks;

- Severe underuse of formal institutional support. Most victims-survivors rely on self-management or informal support; only a very small minority access university services due to lack of trust, visibility, and accessibility;
- Barriers to equitable access to support and reporting mechanisms. Language barriers, inaccessible or fragmented information, non-inclusive formats, and architectural or digital obstacles disproportionately exclude vulnerable groups;
- Power hierarchies and fear of retaliation. Academic dependency, merit-based hierarchies, and fear of academic or professional consequences discourage reporting and bystander intervention;
- Insufficient integration of equity concerns in case management. Current procedures often fail to recognise SH as violence, underestimate “non-severe” cases, and inadequately address intersectional vulnerabilities.

Key recommendations:

- Address the root causes of SH (primary prevention). Transform university cultures and structures through intersectional awareness campaigns, mandatory training on power relations and gender inequalities, and equity provisions embedded in equality plans;
- Ensure equitable access to formal institutional support (secondary prevention). Remove barriers by providing multilingual, inclusive, and accessible information; diversify reporting channels; centralise resources; and develop targeted interventions for high-risk groups in partnership with civil society organisations;
- Protect against unequal impacts and prevent revictimisation (tertiary prevention). Guarantee free legal and psychological support using trauma-informed and intersectional approaches; prevent academic or professional penalties for victims-survivors; and ensure safety plans place responsibility on perpetrators, not victims;
- Integrate equity expertise into institutional responses. Ensure case management and support services are handled by staff trained in gender, intersectionality, and power dynamics to prevent retaliation and secondary harm;
- Adopt equity-centered strategies as a core institutional responsibility. Recognise that without equity-focused prevention, institutional responses will systematically fail those most in need of protection.

Policy Brief 4: Sexual harassment protocols in European Higher Education Institutions: ethics-driven responses to victims-survivors.

Main Authors: Sofia Neves, Estefânia Silva, Mafalda Sousa, Mafalda Ferreira, Emarate Santos, Marina Berbegal-Bernabeu, Carmen Vives-Cases.

Reviewers: Katrien Schaubroeck.

Focus: Ethics-driven SH institutional protocols in European HEIs, with a specific focus on how governance, implementation, coordination, and ethical safeguards shape responses to victims-survivors. Drawing on a comparative analysis of SH protocols across six Uni4Equity universities, the brief examines the extent to which institutional frameworks ensure confidentiality, trauma-informed care, intersectional inclusion, coordinated support, and effective follow-up, and identifies gaps and good practices in translating ethical principles into operational, survivor-centred responses.

Key issues addressed:

- Uneven availability and implementation of SH protocols, with some institutions lacking specific protocols or having documents under revision or pending approval;
- Inconsistent confidentiality safeguards and access to reporting mechanisms, particularly between students and staff;
- Limited integration of trauma-informed approaches within institutional protocols, despite the availability of psychological services;
- Absence of an explicit intersectional approach, failing to address structural vulnerabilities affecting women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, international staff and students, and other at-risk groups;
- Insufficient follow-up and reparation measures for victims-survivors in some institutions;
- Weak or informal coordination mechanisms, including limited institutional referral networks and inconsistent collaboration with external specialized services;
- Language and accessibility barriers, including lack of multilingual protocols and translation services, increasing vulnerability for non-native speakers.

Key recommendations:

- Ensure fully operational, inclusive, and accessible SH protocols in all higher education institutions, guaranteeing equal confidentiality and reporting access for all community members;
- Embed ethics-driven, trauma-informed approaches across all stages of institutional response, including risk assessment, case management, and victim-survivor support;
- Guarantee specialized psychological services delivered by trained professionals, with attention to confidentiality, long-term recovery, and prevention of revictimization;
- Make individualized follow-up and reparation measures mandatory, including protective, compensatory, and restorative actions based on victims-survivors' needs;
- Explicitly integrate an intersectional perspective into protocols, policies, and measures, recognizing differential risks and structural barriers;
- Formalize and strengthen coordination mechanisms, establishing clear internal governance structures and institutional referral networks with external services;
- Improve accessibility and transparency, including multilingual materials, clear information on reporting pathways, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of protocols.

The **last policy brief** is currently under review. Here is its short overview.

Policy Brief 5: Restoring a sense of safety among survivors of sexual harassment in higher education: policy recommendations from the Uni4Equity multinational study.

Main Authors: Sylwia Jaskulska, Barbara Jankowiak, Vanesa Pérez-Martínez, Stefano Porru, Angela Carta, Marlies Wallner, Viktoria Stifter, Iwetta Andruszkiewicz, Katarzyna Waszyńska, Aitana Muñoz-Haba, José Miguel Carrasco, Carmen Vives-Cases, Joana Topa, Estefânia Silva, Maryna Manchenko.

Focus: SH in European higher education as a public health and institutional safety issue, examining prevalence, risk perception, and the role of institutional trust, reporting, and support systems in shaping perceived safety among survivors. Based on the UNI4EQUITY multinational survey, the focus is on strengthening multi-level, systemic institutional responses to promote safety, trust, and accountability.

Key issues addressed:

- High prevalence of sexual harassment in higher education, occurring both in person and online, with significant impacts on survivors' well-being and sense of safety;
- Lower perceived safety among survivors belonging to structurally vulnerable groups, particularly women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and young to mid-career adults;
- Strong association between perceived institutional trust and feelings of safety, contrasted with reduced safety perceptions among those who formally reported sexual harassment;
- Limited confidence in institutional responses, including concerns about fairness, protection from retaliation, and accountability of perpetrators;
- Gaps in awareness, accessibility, and clarity of reporting procedures and available support resources;
- Insufficient emphasis on trust-building, leadership accountability, and transparent governance within university responses;
- Fragmented prevention efforts and uneven integration of bystander engagement, peer support, and survivor-centred approaches across institutions.

Key recommendations:

- Conduct regular, evidence-based assessments of sexual harassment prevalence, risk factors, and institutional climate to inform targeted and equitable prevention strategies;
- Strengthen institutional trust through transparent governance, leadership training, and clear communication on procedures, protections, and outcomes;
- Implement a comprehensive, multi-level prevention framework encompassing primary (awareness and culture change), secondary (bystander intervention and targeted support), and tertiary (survivor care and accountability) measures;
- Ensure clear, accessible, and survivor-centred reporting mechanisms with robust protection measures, particularly in cases involving power hierarchies;
- Provide free, specialized, trauma-informed psychological support delivered by trained professionals, ensuring confidentiality and long-term recovery;

- Develop targeted actions for groups at higher risk of sexual harassment, integrating gender-sensitive and empowerment-oriented approaches;
- Guarantee fair, consistent, and transparent disciplinary procedures for perpetrators, communicating institutional commitment to accountability and survivor protection.

Submitted to: [Frontiers in Public Health](#).

6. Info-products

Creation of info-products was conceptualised as a tool that brings the results of the project to the general public.

Info-products written in a simple and accessible language on the basis of the project results and deliverables (one per WP, where applicable) was produced by the CESIE ETS's team. The products were written by CESIE ETS experts and designed by a professional graphic designer in a visual appealing way. These info-products help the project reach both the general public and a target audience of specialists.

The following products were produced:

- **WP1:** *not applicable*;
- **WP2:** Initial assessment -> [People exposed to sexual harassment at university](#);
- **WP3:** Primary prevention strategies – [Understanding sexual harassment at university](#);
[How to prevent sexual harassment at university](#);
- **WP4:** Secondary prevention strategies -> [Become an active bystander to sexual harassment at university](#);
- **WP5:** Tertiary prevention strategies -> [Develop a comprehensive protocol to combat sexual harassment at your university](#);
- **WP6:** *not applicable*.

All of the info-products are available for download on the project's [LinkTree page](#) (linked on the [Uni4Equity Instagram page](#)). They are also disseminated through Instagram carousels as well as Instagram and Facebook posts.

7. Conclusions

This deliverable contributes to strengthening institutional responses to SH in higher education by offering concise, practical, and equity-driven policy guidance. The consortium encourages universities to engage with the full policy briefs and adapt the recommendations to their institutional contexts.