



Handout for creating awareness concepts at FAU

Be aware!

Working together for
a culture of respect at FAU!

#FAUrespect

No to harassment
and discrimination
at FAU!

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Awareness in a university context

During the last few years, the term awareness has become established in the context of efforts aimed at preventing, averting and investigating cases of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence. In this context, awareness describes forming an appreciation of what is required in order to provide an environment that is safe from assault: "Awareness refers to the conscious attention to situations in which the boundaries of others are or have been crossed. All forms of discrimination and (sexualized) violence can play a role, but it is also about sensitivity to a person's well-being. Awareness work aims to ensure that all people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, origin, appearance, and physical abilities, can feel as comfortable, free, and safe as possible. Boundary-crossing situations and (sexualized) violence should be prevented in advance by making people aware of structures and reflecting on them."¹

Awareness work aims to ensure that all people can feel as comfortable, free, and safe as possible in their environment.

While awareness work is currently gaining in significance across the German cultural scene, the awareness that action needs to be taken is also growing in educational institutions. At first glance, the forms that (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence can take seem to differ between these locations. In contrast to a nightclub, alcohol is rarely served on campus, interactions usually take place during the day, and, not least, the mistaken belief that (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence is a problem associated with "less educated" sectors of society still persists. However, upon closer investigation, it becomes apparent that (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence often occur in universities, particularly in subtle forms such as psychological, verbal and structural abuse, and can be very serious. Such at times unconscious and well-established behaviors can have devastating effects on the mental health and thus the wellbeing, performance and ultimately the success of members of the entire institution. In the context of a university, power structures and strong hierarchies can lead to questionable dependency relationships in which individuals and certain groups experience structural disadvantages, are exploited or are degraded by sexist or discriminatory behavior. The fact that the boundaries between an official university context and private events are often blurred in academia and student life makes matters even more difficult. There is a need for training across many areas of the university to encourage a self-critical and reflective stance, as the unfounded image universities have of themselves as "enlightened organizations"² remains widespread. It is all too often the case that (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence remain undetected, hushed up and not taken seriously, and critical situations arising from inappropriate behavior are not dealt with in a helpful manner. In order to gain a clear picture and to ensure a safer space for all members of the university, the specific forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence must be identified not only on a general level, but also in the context of institutional frame-

¹<https://awareness-akademie.de/glossar> (accessed on April 11, 2023)

²Blackmore/Pantelmann

Awareness in a university context

works. Developing awareness is an ongoing learning process that results in the constant further development of tailored measures aimed at preventing behavior that oversteps the line or violates boundaries.

Universities have a great deal of responsibility in this context. Meeting this responsibility fully is a cross-sectional task that can only be achieved if we work together. As numerous reports from students and staff have shown, until now FAU has not been a place where all people feel equally at ease and where they can work, study, teach, research and celebrate safely and freely. A well-informed culture of vigilance and zero tolerance towards (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence must therefore be considered and actively put into practice across the University as a whole. Actively shaping a culture of equal opportunities and respect at a university promotes the wellbeing of all its members, providing the ideal environment for potential and excellence to unfold. Having said that, the requirements for successful awareness work at a highly complex and large educational institution such as FAU are extremely varied: Different areas of academic life each have very

different conditions and needs. This means that one single awareness concept can scarcely meet the needs of lectures and seminars, supervisory relationships, collaborations and ceremonies and celebrations. In the same way, each of the status groups with their characteristics and needs must be examined adequately, paying particular attention to power structures at universities.

This handout breaks down the main steps of raising awareness and implementing specific measures into five points, explains how they fit into a university context, and categorizes them according to existing laws, concepts and tools. The overall goal of this handout is to provide all members of the University with information and specific options for taking action tailored to the needs of their particular area so that together we can make FAU a safer place characterized by mutual respect. This handout therefore consciously distances itself from trivial instructions and refrains from offering any patent remedies. Rather, the aim of the handout is to encourage all university members in their respective positions to take the initiative and work responsibly on our awareness culture in their own area of responsibility.

Awareness in a university context

Classification of awareness work

As a state-run educational institution and employer, FAU is obliged to comply with the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency. The aim of the law is to prevent or to stop discrimination on the grounds of gender, skin color, or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. In addition, in its Gender equality plan, Diversity concept and Guidelines on preventing and dealing with cases of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment, FAU is committed to a zero tolerance approach towards harassment and discriminatory behavior in teaching, research and, collaboration and to promoting a culture based on appreciation and respect.

Through awareness work,
FAU promotes a culture
based on appreciation
and respect.

The handout is therefore integrated into various measures as one of several tools within the overall context of the University and works with a specific perspective and selected means. The aim of the awareness measures is to address the many aspects of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence and to take an in-depth preventative, interventional and reconstructive approach. With its specific recommendations for action, the concept is intended to provide an application-oriented basis for developing specific protective concepts or measures that focus on the various status groups and that are oriented towards the circumstances and needs in different university contexts. Whereas documents such as the AGG or FAU's Guidelines on preventing and dealing with cases of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment have a mandatory nature, this handout aims to encourage as many FAU members as possible to actively practice and develop a conscious university culture through education, increasing awareness and by providing positive examples. It is based on the basic assumption that all members of FAU advocate a university culture based on respect that is free from harassment and discrimination.

The Awareness Handout:

- Addresses all university members in each position or status group to the same extent.
- Provides material for education and increasing awareness of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence and its prevention.
- Examines various forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence to an equal extent.
- Aims to ensure that wide varieties of encounter situations in the university context are handled safely and sensitively.
- Uses an approach based on education, understanding, cooperation and willingness to take action.

Awareness in a university context

Objectives and mode of action

The aim of working with the handout is to reach many members of FAU who hold positions of responsibility and to empower them to develop suitable measures for education, raising awareness, preventing and dealing with (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence in their area of responsibility. Building on the foundations of legislation and personal commitment, awareness work thus offers the opportunity to develop and implement effective and suitable measures for the various types of situations where people come together at FAU.

Contribute to this
through education,
raising awareness and
other effective measures!

Various requirements

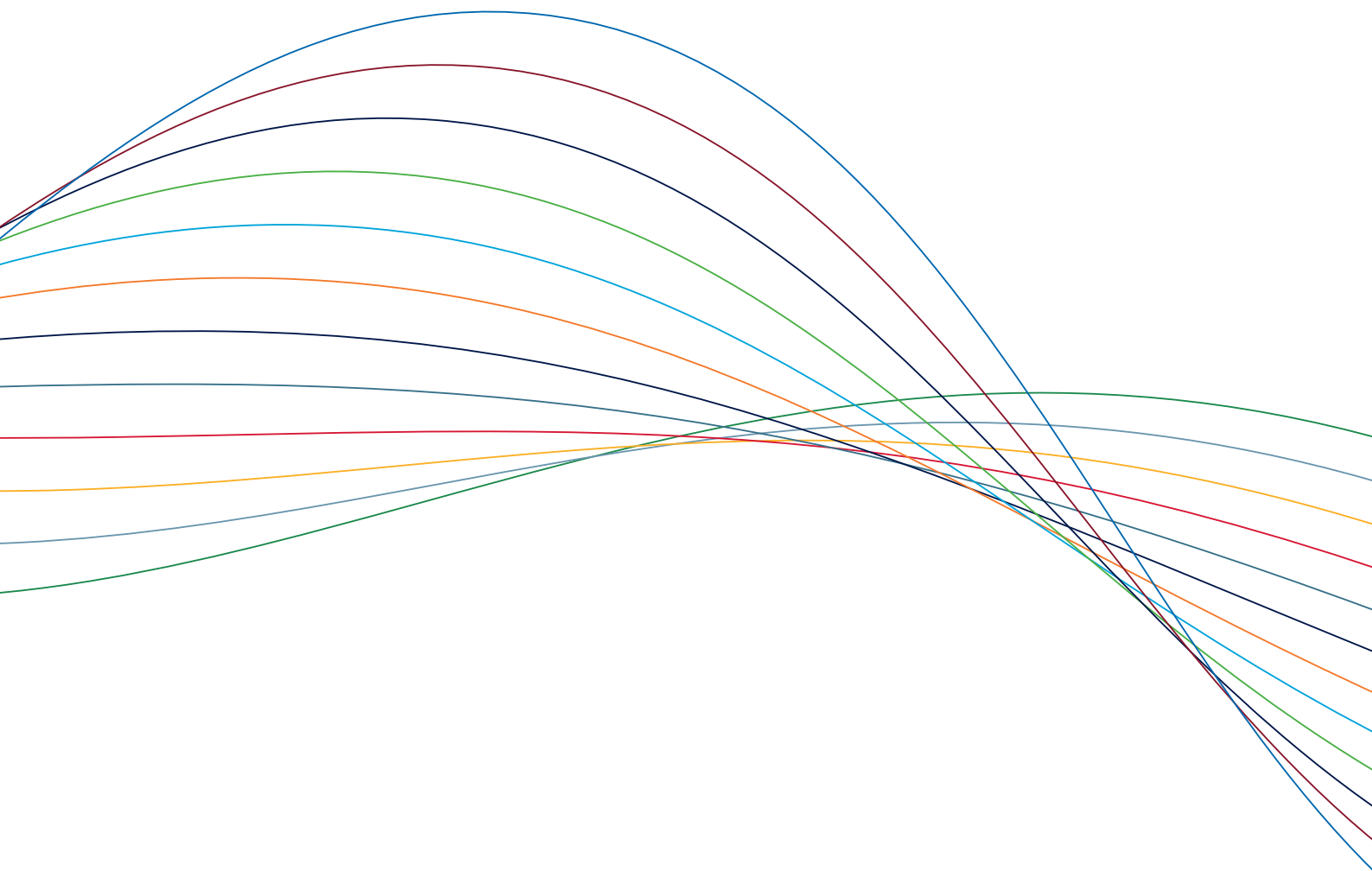
Across FAU, there is a wide range of different situations where people meet and work together in which an awareness of their diverse needs and circumstances is essential, ranging from lectures and seminars, examinations, counseling, supervision and working groups, symposia or conferences to field trips, student parties, visiting the cafeteria or completing an internship semester at a company. Each one of these settings requires a different framework and entails different requirements and needs for awareness work. Nonetheless, there are fundamental modes of behavior and ways of communicating that are expected in each context and that should be set down in a general Code of Conduct. This handout refers to the universal basic rules of respectful interaction at FAU. The toolkit and the checklists that follow on from the handout (see: www.equality-and-diversity.fau.eu/awareness) provide specific advice and practical examples for teaching, events, examinations and supervisory relationships etc. that can also be modified for use in other areas. The team at the Office of Equality and Diversity would like to explicitly encourage you to take the initiative and transfer the recommendations to each situation where people come together in the academic context where boundaries may potentially be violated.

Awareness in a university context

Application

The Executive Board explicitly recommends and welcomes the use of this handout in all areas mentioned in the handout. It will feature at numerous key points in the university's operations, for instance in committees, in the campus management system, when booking rooms etc. All members of the university who are responsible for organizing or taking care of one of the settings named above are called on to check their setting critically using the available checklists and to consult with others to decide on the implementation of adequate awareness work for their

area of responsibility. We would expressly recommend sharing intermediate steps and results of your own awareness work, for instance in the shape of modified checklists you have used or best practice examples, with colleagues and the team at the Office of Equality and Diversity in order to allow these to be incorporated into future revised versions of the handout.



Handout for awareness work

The following gives more detail on the five steps of awareness work.

1 Training for coordinators, organization teams and multipliers

2 Raising awareness among target groups (students, participants)

3 Selecting and implementing measures

4 Dealing with misconduct

5 Evaluation and networking

The five steps give you a concise and general overview of awareness work in the university context. The handout provides you with several checklists and a toolkit that you can use to assess your requirements for a certain event or gathering. You can work through these templates step by step to identify the relevant questions, information and possibilities for action for your event and your area of responsibility.

Step 1:

Training for coordinators, organization teams and multipliers

Recognizing, correctly assessing and understanding behavior that oversteps the mark requires attentiveness, knowledge and practice. Make sure that all teaching staff and those in positions of responsibility have sufficient knowledge of the various types of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence. Discuss with others in your team to decide how much knowledge is appropriate for your team and your event. Depending on the size of the team and the event it may be worthwhile creating an “awareness team” that gains a deeper understanding of the topic by attending training courses. Make the most of the (prior) knowledge and strengths of your team members. Please also note: Forming an awareness team gives its members a certain expert status and it can be a helpful element when allocating tasks and responsibilities, but it does not free other organizers and people involved in the event from their own responsibilities. Awareness relies on teamwork.

The [awareness website](#) of the Office of Equality and Diversity gives a selection of information material and training formats if you would like to organize a course tailored to the needs of your area.

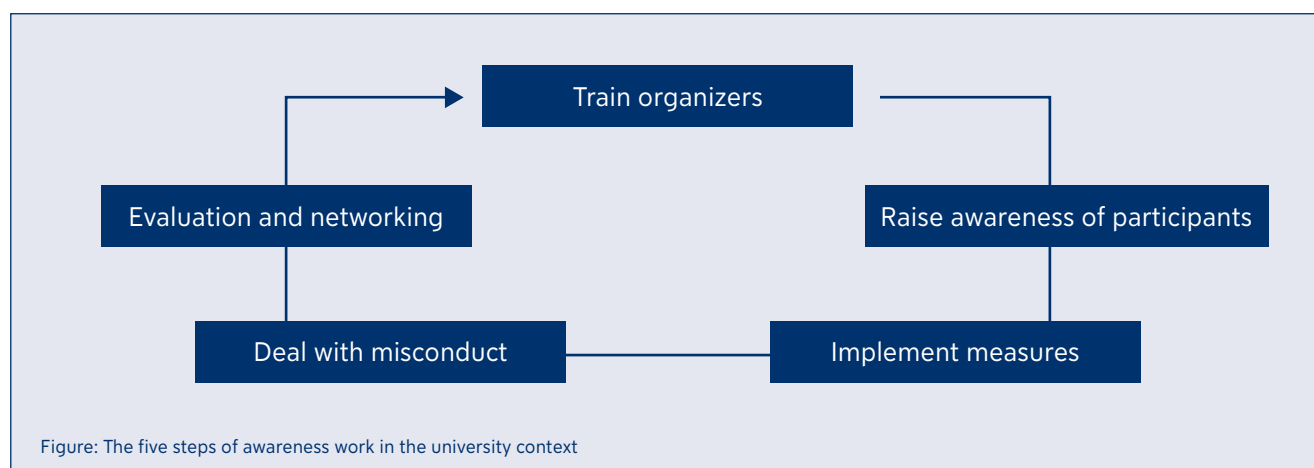


Figure: The five steps of awareness work in the university context

Handout for awareness work

Step 2:

Raising awareness among target groups

Based on your own in-depth knowledge and discussions within your team, you can now decide how and to what extent you should raise the awareness of those attending the event. In order to avoid hurtful and abusive behavior, all participants have to be aware of the rules and act responsibly and with due care, irrespective of whether they can be seen as potentially likely to discriminate against others, to be discriminated against, or an observer. Make sure that all those present are familiar with the code of conduct they are expected to comply with, are aware of the most common forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence, and are able to act in a sensitive and responsible manner. All those involved must know which behavior is acceptable and which will not be tolerated. Participants should be made aware of how to deal with critical situations and possible consequences in the event of misconduct, which points of contact are available should they require assistance, and helpful behavior vis-à-vis victims and perpetrators.

You can get started
right away with the
checklists and the toolkit.

Step 3:

Selecting and implementing measures

Now you are at the stage of planning and designing your event to ensure that it is safe in all respects. During this step, you investigate the specific requirements and framework conditions for your event in more detail and decide on the most appropriate measures, which you subsequently implement. The attachments include several checklists sorted by topic and a comprehensive toolkit with specific measures, ideas and best practice examples. If a checklist is not yet available for your format, we would recommend working with the checklists "Training for coordinators, organizational teams and multipliers" and "Raising awareness among target groups" in order to determine your awareness requirements. In addition, you can use the toolkit and checklists from related areas as inspiration to derive suitable measures for your area. Sharing experiences and ideas with others who may have gathered experience in the same area or who see certain requirements can also be very valuable.

Handout for awareness work

Step 4:

Dealing with misconduct

Whenever cases of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence are experienced or witnessed, a sensitive and helpful approach to the situation is required. Assessing and dealing with critical situations is not easy, and requires training, attention, courage and circumspection. In the first instance, the focus must always be on the boundaries and needs of the victim: They decide what assistance they would like and which steps they would like to pursue. In the event of public, verbal forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination or violence or of someone overstepping boundaries (for instance during a lecture or seminar, a committee meeting, a team meeting), third parties or witnesses can intervene by stating that such comments are inappropriate, thereby making their own stance clear.

Talk consciously
about values and
behaviors.
Seek support and
awareness alliances!

In the first instance, you must make sure that all those involved are aware of and can use the complaints channels and initial points of contact (steps 1 to 3). Once that is the case, actively networking with complaints channels can also prove a helpful approach for dealing with misconduct. Collaborating and sharing experiences with others gives you important information that helps you assess incidents better, judge the appropriate response to them and make pathways and processes as efficient as possible. This boosts your ability to make the support and counseling services you offer as professional as possible (e.g. in terms of confidentiality, empathy, safety) and allows you to offer an easily accessible transition to formal complaints procedures, such as [complaints procedures at FAU](#).

It is up to the organizers to impose consequences depending on the type of the event in case of a violation of the code of conduct. This may for example involve restricting access, expelling someone from the premises or in serious cases stopping the event or calling the police, for example if a criminal offense has taken place. Both the organizers of the event and participants should be aware of possible sanctions and consequences, and these should be communicated transparently before the event.

In addition, FAU has a [formal complaints team in the University administration \(P6\) for students, staff and integrated external parties as well as a complaints team in the human resources department at UKER for staff at Uniklinikum Erlangen](#). Incidents tend to be reported and pursued more effectively if observers are encouraged to act as witnesses or persons of trust, raising their awareness and actively involving them in the process. This leads to a strong, responsible community.

Handout for awareness work

Step 5:

Evaluation and networking

All cases of (sexual) harassment, discrimination or violence that come to the attention of the event organizers must be recorded anonymously. This is important for gaining accurate structural knowledge of the frequency and nature of incidents and enabling appropriate protective measures to be derived for future events. It is important to differentiate between recording individual incidents as part of the complaint procedure aimed at imposing an appropriate punishment and anonymously recording incidents for structural purposes. When recording incidents for a structural report, anonymity must be guaranteed in order to protect all those involved. Recording incidents in this way does not serve to impose consequences in any individual instance, rather it is aimed at making structural problems visible and open for discussion, with a view to initiating the necessary changes.

Perpetrators pursue strategies such as encouraging taboos, keeping quiet and playing down the importance of any incidents. Quantifiable information about incidents must therefore be prepared in such a way that it can be freely discussed. Awareness work entails dauntlessly bringing knowledge and figures about the topic to the attention of all key stakeholders in order to gain allies and fellow campaigners for consistently continuing to raise awareness at FAU.

Allyship and creating awareness alliances are key to initiating cultural change moving towards preventing (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence. Look for allies and fellow campaigners to help you fight your cause. Approach competence centers to get the information you need. Share your findings, ideas and best practice experiences. Dealing with (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence can be a strain. It is therefore helpful to seek backing and

make it clear to yourself that encouraging a safe, respectful and appreciative culture at university is in the interests of all members of the university. Be bold enough to partake repeatedly in self reflection and encourage a fruitful discussion of values.

Awareness training courses and information material

Awareness work is based predominantly on training courses and continued education. FAU offers a wide range of information material if you want to explore the topic in greater depth. The Office of Equality and Diversity regularly offers various different training courses on specific topics either in person or online, tailored to various target groups. Information about courses currently on offer is available on the [*Office of Equality and Diversity's website*](#) and via their newsletter.

External providers of further education also offer a wide range of courses for various areas of work, such as awareness or anti-bias training for teaching or in administration, or diversity in project and task management etc. It is definitely also worth considering organizing an in-house training course tailored to the needs of your team and their tasks.

Handout for awareness work

Overview of points of contact for complaints, help and advice

In the case of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence, FAU members can contact the independent *point of contact for initial advice and referrals at FAU*. The website also lists further *professional points of contact for advice and services* focusing on anti-discrimination, equal opportunities, sexual violence and contacts for emergency and crisis services.

Sources and literature:

Blackmore, Sabine; Pantelmann Heike (Hrsg): *Sexualisierte Belästigung, Diskriminierung und Gewalt im Hochschulkontext. Herausforderungen, Umgangsweisen und Prävention. Springer Gabler 2023.*

<https://awareness-akademie.de/glossar>
(accessed on April 11, 2023)



www.equality-and-diversity.fau.eu/awareness

