

Prevalence study of gender-based violence in the academic environment

Frequently asked questions

List of contents

Why is this prevalence study being conducted?	1
Why participate in a prevalence study?	2
What is a prevalence study?	2
How is gender-based violence defined?	2
What forms of gender-based violence does the study map?	3
Why does the study not use the term sexual harassment, which is enshrined in the legal system, and use the term gender-based violence instead?	3
People may interpret different situations differently, will the data be indicative of different forms of violence?	3
How will anonymity be ensured?	4
Who will have access to my data?	4
Who will have access to the primary data file?	5
Where will the data be stored during the implementation of the survey?	5
Where will the data be stored after the survey is done?	5
What data and outputs will be given to the institutions involved?	6
Will the questionnaire also be available in English?	6
What information will be publicly presented?	6

Why is this prevalence study being conducted?

Gender-based violence is a complex, widespread and persistent problem in many organisations, including higher education and research institutions. Their specific organisational structures and power hierarchies, heavily structured according to functional position, age and gender, provide an enabling environment for the emergence and spread of different forms of violence. The most recent available research data on the prevalence of gender-based violence in the academic environment in the Czech Republic dates back to 2009 ([Vohlídalová 2011, 2010](#); Pavlík et al [2009, 2011](#)). Given the cases that higher education and research institutions are dealing with, it is therefore important to gain new insights into how widespread this phenomenon is in academia. The results of the study will serve as a basis for measures and recommendations for the management of higher education and research institutions, as well as for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports as a governmental body.

Why participate in the prevalence study?

This prevalence study is the first of its kind in the Czech academic environment. By participating in this study – whether or not you have experienced of any form of gender-based violence – you have the opportunity to contribute to estimating the extent of the problem. Your responses will allow us to gain a comprehensive insight into the experiences of gender-based violence, which can lead to improving the situation and the creation of a safe and inclusive environment for all. The analyses will also provide information to Czech institutions on where they stand and whether they are providing a safe environment to their students and staff.

What is a prevalence study?

A prevalence study serves as a tool to determine the prevalence of a phenomenon across sociodemographic groups in a given population. This method was chosen primarily because there is currently no Czech data mapping the prevalence of gender-based violence in academic settings. The aim is thus to provide individual public higher education institutions and institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences with overall information on how widespread this phenomenon is among individual groups (students, staff) according to their field of study and rank. Other forms of surveys (e.g. representative surveys) would not be able to provide targeted information to all institutions involved.

How is gender-based violence defined?

Gender-based violence is defined as all acts of physical, sexual, psychological, economic or other forms of violence that are directed against any group or groups of persons because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The consequences of gender-based violence thus affect both individuals and entire organisations.

In this study, we approach gender-based violence as a manifestation of structural power and domination. This structural nature is intertwined with other axes of inequality, so we consider it essential to highlight the intersectional nature of this study. In our research we take into account hierarchical relationships typical of academic settings, such as teacher-student, supervisor-doctoral student, or migration status, as well as their intersections, which significantly influence the experience of gender-based violence, but also issues of age, disciplinary affiliation, and whether the person is domestic or internationally mobile.

What forms of gender-based violence does the study map?

The study examines the prevalence of gender-based violence in its full range of forms, including online violence. These include physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence and sexual harassment.

Why does the study not use the term sexual harassment, which is enshrined in the legal system, and instead uses the term gender-based violence instead?

In this study, we examine the prevalence of sexual harassment as one form of gender-based violence. The study uses the term gender-based violence as an umbrella term to include other forms of violence and discrimination that are gender-based in addition to sexual harassment.

People may interpret different situations differently, will the data be indicative of different forms of violence?

The fact that people interpret different situations in different ways is one of the reasons why it is important to examine gender-based violence in-depth using concrete examples. This study deals with possible differences in the interpretation of different situations by asking respondents about their actual experience with particular types of behaviours. Thus, it is not questions such as "Have you experienced sexual harassment?", but questions such as "Has anyone asked you intrusive questions about your private life?", or in the case of economic violence, e.g. "Has anyone harmed your work or studies by deliberately damaging objects (e.g. damaging lab equipment, laptop, etc.)?".

The research also includes questions about whether or not a report was made in the case of a particular experience and the reasons that may have led to non-reporting. These questions will help to assess the level of awareness of the problematic nature of different forms of violence.

Is gender-based violence in the academic environment somehow specific?

The specificity of the academic environment is its strongly hierarchical structure. Power imbalances within departments, but also in the power of teaching staff vis-à-vis students or between those in the early stages of their academic careers and those more experienced, create relationships of dependency in which gender-based violence remains more easily hidden. People in a position of dependency may be afraid to report their experience for fear of retaliation and damage to their own reputation.

Higher education institutions are also environments where young people are concentrated and where alcohol or other substances may be consumed. International studies show that this context can be a breeding ground for various forms of peer violence.

Pressure to maintain the 'reputation' of both institutions and individuals also plays a significant role in the academic environment, which can lead to the concealment of cases of gender-based violence. Moreover, given the interconnectedness of academics and their institutions, gender-based violence can have a significant impact on individuals' education and careers.

How will anonymity be ensured?

Respondents will receive a universal anonymous link (common for the entire organizational unit of the institution, e.g. a faculty of a higher education institution or an institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences) and will not identify themselves in any way (by filling in name, email or any other identification data) while completing the survey. Therefore, the questionnaire will not be in any way assignable to a specific respondent, nor will any meta-information be collected that could enable such an identification (e.g. the IP address of a computer from which a person is filling in the questionnaire). The questionnaire can be accessed from any computer, so there is no need to fill it in from a work computer.

Who will have access to my data?

By "data" we mean the answers to the questions in the questionnaire. At no stage of the data collection will the data contain any identifying data related to specific persons. Only higher education institutions and institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences will have access to the emails of the persons contacted to fill in the questionnaires. However, they will not have access to the individual data from the completed

questionnaires. Only internal staff of the technical implementer of the data collection (Focus Agency) working on this project will have access to this data. Once the data collection is completed and accepted by the contracting authority (Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences), only authorised data analysts will have access to the data on the part of the technical implementer of the data collection.

The accumulated data from all research organisations will be made available for secondary research after the end of the STRATIN+ project. For this purpose, the data will be processed in such a way that it will not be possible to re-identify the survey participants or participating organisations. The data will be aggregated for the set of higher education institutions and the set of institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Who will have access to the primary data file?

Only internal staff of the technical implementer of the data collection (Focus Agency) working on the project will have access to the data. Once the data collection is completed, the data will be handed over to the implementation team of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences. The completed questionnaire will not be in any way attributable to a specific respondent, nor will any meta-information be collected that could allow such identification.

Where will the data be stored during the implementation of the survey?

Your responses will be stored during the collection process on a secure server of the technical implementer of the data collection (FOCUS Agency), which is physically located in the Czech Republic. The server is physically and cyber-secured in a standard manner.

Where will the data be stored after the survey is completed?

In line with the European Union's open access policy, the data from all research organisations will be made available for secondary research at the end of the STRATIN+ project. For this purpose, the data will be processed in such a way that neither the participants in the survey nor the participating organisations can be re-identified. The data will be aggregated for the entire higher education sector and for the whole of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Any potentially identifiable data will be removed or aggregated from the dataset. The dataset will then be permanently and securely stored in the [Czech Social Science Data Archive](#), where it will be available only for legitimate research purposes upon request.

What data and outputs will be given to the institutions involved?

All institutions participating in the survey will receive a summary report containing information on the prevalence and consequences of gender-based violence at the university or institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. For this purpose, the responses will be processed in such a way that it will not be possible to identify the participants in the survey. Any data that could potentially be re-identified (e.g. experiences of individuals with a specific characteristic such as gender identity or ethnicity) will be removed from the dataset or will be aggregated to a higher level.

Will the questionnaire also be available in English?

The questionnaire is available in both Czech and English versions. In this way it will be possible to carry out the survey among people coming to the Czech academic environment from abroad.

What information will be publicly presented?

The aim of the study is to provide information to individual institutions to discuss and address the issue internally and to gain new insights into the prevalence of gender-based violence in the academic sector. The publicly presented results will be aggregated to the level of the entire higher education sector and the entire Czech Academy of Sciences, disaggregated by discipline, student and employee status, gender and other characteristics. Information on individual higher education institutions or institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences will not be presented separately.