

Critical Reflection Structured Guide

for Critical Cultural Awareness in ECEC Higher Education Institutions

Human Rights Guiding principles	ANTI-BIAS GOALS	
	GOALS FOR ECEC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMMES AND ACTORS	GOALS FOR STUDENTS/ FUTURE ECEC PROFESSIONALS
	IDENTITY: To be conscious of one's own culture, attitudes and values, and how they influence practice.	IDENTITY: To support each student's identity (individual and group) and their sense of belonging.
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures and safeguards are in place to protect the freedom of expression and the individual development of diverse personal identities? • How do the classroom management support the unhindered expression of personal and cultural identities in everyday academic and professional life? 	
Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do students and teachers actively encourage and support one another's expression of personal identity in daily university life? 	
Solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are processes of personal identity construction addressed within course content and learning objectives? • How does the selection of teaching materials ensure that diversity is valued, and that representations of non-dominant cultures are accurate and affirming? • To what extent does the teacher cultivate a learning community that respects and values the unique expressions of each individual? • How are discussions of diverse values actively encouraged and developed within the classroom? • Is there space in classroom discussions to question traditional binary understandings of identity and systems of oppression (e.g., black/white, wealthy/poor, male/female), thereby addressing interrelated forms of discrimination such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, nationalism, and ableism? 	

Human Rights Guiding principles

ANTI-BIAS GOALS

GOALS FOR ECEC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMMES AND ACTORS

GOALS FOR STUDENTS/ FUTURE ECEC PROFESSIONALS

DIVERSITY: To be comfortable with difference, have empathy and form deep, caring connections across all dimensions of human diversity.

IDIVERSITY: To foster student’s empathy, and support them to be comfortable with difference.

Equity

- What mechanisms ensure that equity, freedom, and solidarity are reflected in classroom management and university policies and decision-making structures?
- To what extent do institutional policies actively promote ethnic and cultural diversity among students and staff?

Freedom

- How does the curriculum incorporate counterstories to foster awareness of cultural diversity and challenge dominant narratives?
- To what extent are study programs and learning opportunities adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students?

Solidarity

- To what extent do examination formats consider the diverse backgrounds of students, including linguistic and cultural diversity?
- Is there space in classroom discussions to question traditional binary understandings of identity and systems of oppression (e.g., black/white, wealthy/poor, male/female), thereby addressing interrelated forms of discrimination such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, nationalism, and ableism?
- To what extent do institutional communications—such as marketing for study programs—accurately reflect and represent a broad spectrum of human expressions and identities?

ANTI-BIAS GOALS

GOALS FOR ECEC HIGHER
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GOALS FOR STUDENTS/
FUTURE ECEC
PROFESSIONALS

JUSTICE: To critically think about diversity, bias and discrimination.

JUSTICE: To encourage students to critically think about diversity, bias and discrimination.

Equity

- What formal complaint procedures are in place to address discrimination matters affecting personal identities? To what extent do these complaint procedures provide a protected space for vulnerable individuals?

Freedom

- How is the institution prepared to handle complex dilemmas where freedom of speech might conflict with the need to prevent the dissemination of discriminatory ideas and practices?

Solidarity

- How is a culture of human rights and social justice institutionally embedded and continuously developed? How are institutional audits and evaluations aligned with human rights principles and commitments to equity?
- To what extent does the curriculum address the historical causes of social injustice and foster critical reflection—for example, through memory work?
- To what extent is dominance-free dialogue established as a core ideal within the curriculum?
- What competencies and learning objectives are specified to promote educational equity and foster critical cultural awareness?
- How critically are social power dynamics, domination relations, and discriminatory structures examined within classroom discourse?
- Are materials designed to challenge dominant narratives and encourage critical engagement with issues of equity and inclusion?
- Does the teacher introduce justice-related vocabulary — including concepts for discussing social inequalities, intersectionality, and critiques of dominant discourses?
- Does the curriculum actively encourage critical engagement with issues of power, privilege, and discrimination?

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ACTIVISM: To confidently engage in dialogue about issues of diversity, bias and discrimination. Work to challenge individual and institutional forms of prejudice and discrimination.

ACTIVISM: To empower students to stand up for themselves and others in difficult situations

Equity

- How is meaningful participation and influence ensured for students, faculty, and staff across all levels of governance? What measures are being pursued to increase the participation of all community members, including intersectional perspectives and marginalized groups, in decision-making processes and academic activities among both students and staff?

Freedom

- How are students, faculty, and employees actively encouraged to act in solidarity with one another?
- To what extent are students encouraged and trained to express their freedom of thought within coursework and assessments?

Solidarity

- How is freedom and solidarity balanced against each other in the curriculum?
- How does the teacher support students in engaging in reflective work on their own identities, including the exploration of advantage and privilege?
- How are students equipped to think critically about differences of opinion and cultural expressions, and to what extent is a climate created that fosters respect and enjoyment of cultural diversity?
- How does the teacher balance students' need for safe spaces to explore new and potentially oppositional or uncomfortable subject positions?
- How are the challenges posed by the presence of systematically marginalized members — due to historical inequalities or colonial legacies — addressed in classroom practices?