



Prevention of Radicalization and Extremism

educating to stimulate assertive communication and foster peaceful environments

Introduction

According to the federal Swiss Security Network¹, “Radicalization is a process by which persons are persuaded to take increasingly extreme political, social or religious measures, potentially even the use of extreme violence, to achieve their goals. Violent extremist activities are efforts by organizations that reject constitutional and democratic principles and which commit, incite or endorse acts of violence in order to achieve their goals.”

According to the European Commission², “Radicalization is a phased and complex process in which an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses or condones violence, including acts of terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purpose.”

Further, “While radicalization is not a new phenomenon, the trends, means and patterns of radicalization evolve and responses have to be adapted. Home-grown lone actors and (returning) foreign terrorist fighters raise security issues and specific challenges for [preventive] work. Internet platforms, including social media, can be abused by violent extremists, terrorist groups and their sympathizers by providing new opportunities for mobilization, recruitment and communication.”

Vulnerability

Some individuals may be (more) vulnerable to radicalization. The following list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all individuals experiencing the below are at risk of radicalization.

- Identity Crisis – the student is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society.
- Personal Crisis – the student may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of government policy
- Unmet Aspirations – the student may have perceptions of injustice: a feeling of failure
- Rejection of civic life
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement/reintegration.
- Special Educational Needs – students may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organizations.
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behavior.
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis

¹ [Prevention of radicalization and violent extremism \(admin.ch\)](#)

² [Prevention of radicalization \(europa.eu\)](#)

Policy

UIBS-ECLS is an academic community of over 100 nationalities and cultures. Students are taught to respect and celebrate diversity of cultures and religion. There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our organization, whether from internal or external sources. We welcome students, faculty members and team members of all or no faiths and religions. We promote an inclusive society and common human values, and highly value student participation, cultural diversity and stakeholder cooperation.

We are aware that individuals can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views already from an early age which emanate from a variety of sources and media, and that at times individuals may themselves reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students or faculty and team members will always be challenged and, where appropriate, dealt with in line with the relevant Code of Conduct.

Any exploitation of students, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism, or radicalization of students, should be viewed as a safeguarding concern. Protecting them from the risk of radicalization is part of the institution's safeguarding duty.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities, our faculty and team members **will** be alert to:

- Disclosures by students of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of the institution, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where students have not actively sought these out;
- Graffiti, symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images;
- Students accessing extremist material online;
- Parental reports of changes in behavior, friendship or actions and requests for assistance;
- Local authority services and police reports of issues affecting students in other institutions or settings;
- Students voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives;
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence;
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our Equality policy, views based on, but not limited to, age, ethnicity (*including race, color, caste and nationality*), culture, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, disability, and pregnancy or maternity, and
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others.

Our faculty members strive to eradicate the myths and assumptions that can lead to some individuals becoming alienated and disempowered, especially where the narrow approaches that students may experience elsewhere may make it harder for them to challenge or question these radical influences. This will be achieved by quality teaching. We ensure that all our teaching methodologies help our students build resilience to extremism and give them a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills.

Our flexible curriculum design allows us to appropriately adapt our teaching methodologies to address specific issues of radicalization and extremism. In doing so we will apply the methodologies following the three broad categories of:

- Making a connection with young individuals through quality teaching and a student-centered approach. Equipping our students with the appropriate skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness for resilience.

- Facilitating a ‘safe space’ for dialogue through the appointment of Confidential Counselor, who students can approach in confidence at any time, to share any problem or concern related to being exposed to extremism.
- Sensitizing faculty and team members to detect early signs of radicalization. We ensure that all our team members are equipped to recognize extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it.

Towards our faculty and team members, we apply safer recruitment practices and sound employment practices in general and in doing so deny opportunities for inappropriate recruitment or advancement. We are alert to the possibility that individuals may seek to gain positions within our institution so as to unduly influence our institution’s character and ethos. We are aware that such individuals may seek to limit the opportunities for our students thereby rendering them vulnerable to extremist views and radicalization as a consequence.

By implementing and adhering to safer recruitment practices, as well as by ensuring an ongoing culture of vigilance within our institution, we aim to minimize opportunities for radicalization and extremism.

The institution’s dedicated Confidential Counselor can be reached for any concern, support and information at confidentialcounselor@crossculturaleducation.org.

This policy further links to the institution’s Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

We further consider the UNESCO publication³ *‘Youth led guide on prevention of violent extremism through education’* a valuable additional resource to prevent radicalization and extremism.

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³ [Youth led guide on prevention of violent extremism through education - UNESCO Digital Library](#)