

Hate speech

What's Hate Speech?

Imagine someone saying nasty things or encouraging violence towards another person just because of their race, religion, gender, or who they love. That's hate speech. The Cambridge Dictionary describes it as speech that promotes hate or violence based on factors like race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Keep in mind, hate speech isn't just words. It can be an action, a gesture, or even an online post. This can happen among students among teachers/employees, or among teachers/employees and students. Every member of the academic community contributes to creating a safe and respectful environment free of hate speech.

Masaryk University, as well as the Faculty of Medicine (shortened as FM MU), has no tolerance for hate speech. At FM MU, everyone believes in a safe space free from hate. The faculty ensures the rights of students and staff on university ground and provides a safe and dignified environment for development and cooperation.

Where Do People Face Hate Speech?

Sadly, you can come across hate speech almost anywhere – in schools, on the streets, or even while browsing the internet from your home. Nowadays, the internet is a big source of hate speech.

What About Freedom of Speech?

FM MU values everyone's right to express themselves. The law and university rules protect this freedom. But remember, just because you can say something doesn't mean you should. Think of it this way: your freedom to speak stops where it might hurt someone else. If speech is harmful or crosses a line, it's not protected and should be stopped.

Examples: What's Okay and What's Not

1. Saying: *"I think John is clumsy, silly, and can't behave."*
 - ✓ This might not be nice, but it's an opinion about an individual.
2. Saying: *"Group Y, where John belongs, is a huge problem because they're all thieves and should be wiped out in the worst way."*
 - ✗ Not okay! This is targeting an entire group and promoting harm.

When discussing what still falls under freedom of speech and what no longer does, you can follow a simple test: am I already infringing on someone else's freedom with my statement? If so, can it affect or harm him or her in any way? If so, pay attention! It is possible to be brought before a disciplinary committee or even a court of law for such speech! So be careful with them.

When you're not sure if what you're saying is okay, ask yourself: *"Is my statement hurting or limiting someone else's freedom?"* or *"Can my words harm someone?"* If the answer is yes, be careful!

You could find yourself in trouble, facing disciplinary actions or even legal sanctions.

What Happens if You Cross the Line at University?

If you make a not-so-nice comment related to life at the university, the Disciplinary Committee of FM MU might step in. Why? Because it might count as disciplinary offence of "intolerant rude behavior" (based on certain rules). And if it's serious, you might even risk getting kicked out.

But What If It's Really Bad?

If what you said or did is super harmful, it could be considered as a crime under Act No. 40/2009 Coll., the Criminal Code. Think of it like this: if you're motivated by hate because someone is from a certain group, and you act on it or promote violence, that's really serious. The law has specific sections that spell out these crimes. You could face fines, community service, or even jail.

Who Should You Talk To If You See Hate Speech?

If you hear or face hate speech, don't stay silent. You can reach out to the MU Ombudsman or even the Dean to let them know. If it's super serious and might be a crime, consider contacting the police or prosecutor's office.

Crimes under Act No. 40/2009 Coll., Criminal Code:

§352 Violence against a group of the population and against the individual

If you threaten a group of people/an individual with death, harm, or significant damage or use violence against people because of their background, you can be put in prison (max. 3 years).

§ 353 Dangerous threats

If you threaten another with death or serious harm in such a way as to cause reasonable apprehension, you could be sent to prison (max. 1 year).

§ 354 Dangerous pursuit

If you are stalking someone for a long time, persistently contacting them online or threatening to harm them, you will also be sent to prison (max. 3 years).

§ 355 Defamation of nation, race, ethnic or other group of persons

If you publicly defame other nations, races, ethnic groups, languages, political opinions or religions, you could end up in jail (max. 3 years).

§ 356 Incitement to hatred against a group of people or to restriction of their rights and freedoms

If you publicly conspire, incite hatred towards a nation, race, religion, class or other group of people or limit the rights and freedoms of their members, you could end up in jail (max. 3 years).

§ 403 Establishment, support and promotion of a faction aimed at the suppression of human rights and freedoms

If you establish, support or promote a faction which openly proclaims racial, national, religious or class hatred, you will be imprisoned (max. 10 years).

§ 403a Dissemination of works for the promotion of a faction aimed at the suppression of human rights and freedoms

If you produce, import, export, offer, mediate or sell work which is related to support for faction suppressing human rights in large amounts, you will end up in prison (max. 6 years).

§ 404 Expression of sympathy for a faction aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms

If you publicly show sympathy for the faction, which is against human rights, you will be imprisoned (max. 3 years).

§ 405 Denying, questioning, endorsing and justifying genocide

If you publicly deny, approve or attempt to justify genocide or other war crimes, you will end up in prison (max. 3 years).

Materials for more information:

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