The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism: What It Is; Why It Helps; and the Question of Free Speech

Richard J. Ross

 In 2016, an international group of scholars produced a “working definition of antisemitism” for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). It has been adopted by hundreds of universities and organizations and by over thirty countries, including nearly all the major democracies. The United States deploys it domestically and in its foreign relations through the Department of State. The European Union, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and several agencies within the United Nations have endorsed it. The European Commission published a *Handbook for the Practical Use of the IHRA Working Definition* of Antisemitism, which collects “good practices.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The IHRA definition has been endorsed by the student governments of thirty American universities, including Stanford, UCLA, Notre Dame, and four members of the Big Ten (Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin). (Appendix 1 provides a list of some of the countries, organizations, and universities that have adopted the working definition.)

The text opens with a highly general, single sentence definition of antisemitism, followed by eleven examples. Some focus on classic antisemitism—for instance, harming Jews for religious reasons, or treating Jews as agents of a worldwide conspiracy. Some examples address the antisemitism that can emerge in the course of overheated criticism of Israel. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, merely illustrative. The working definition insists that its examples should not be applied without attention to the circumstances in which they arose. Its list of “contemporary examples” explicitly states that these “*could*” be instances of “antisemitism in public life . . . taking into account the overall *context*” (emphasis added).

 The IHRA definition describes itself as “non-legally binding.” This is important. It is not a hate speech code. It is not meant to be incorporated into state law or university rules as a foundation for punishment or censorship. Rather, the definition is an educational tool, a set of guidelines for decent people to distinguish between the wide realm of political speech and social commentary and the smaller realm of antisemitism. Helping people to recognize antisemitism would better equip them to reject and combat it. (More on this later.) The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and the leadership team of the Academic Engagement Network (AEN) have all endorsed the IHRA text in this way: as an educational, not a disciplinary, aid.[[2]](#footnote-2)

 Let’s begin with the text of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism:

In the spirit of the Stockholm Declaration that states: “With humanity still scarred by . . . antisemitism and xenophobia the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils” the committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial called the IHRA Plenary in Budapest 2015 to adopt the following working definition of antisemitism.

On 26 May 2016, the Plenary in Bucharest decided to:

Adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

* Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
* Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
* Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
* Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust)
* Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
* Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
* Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
* Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
* Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
* Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
* Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

**Antisemitic acts are criminal** when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

**Criminal acts are antisemitic** when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

**Antisemitic discrimination** is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The IHRA Working Definition Helps Identify Antisemitism, a Growing Problem on Campus

 The IHRA text is useful because well-meaning people cannot recognize and combat antisemitism unless they know what it is. This can prove difficult because of the complexity of antisemitism and its ability to insinuate itself into political, religious, and social commentary. Jews are both a religion and a people. Some forms of antisemitism target Jews as a religion (scorning and killing Christ; imprisoning people in superstition and soul-killing legalism). Some forms target Jews, including atheist Jews, as a people (charges that we are disloyal to our countries of residence and serve “international Jewry,” indictments of money-grubbing financial speculation, Nazi fears of “race pollution,” white supremacist suspicions that we lead efforts to “replace” them with non-white immigrants). Antisemitism is not one thing. Organized and articulate Jew-hatred goes back to at least 300 BCE. It has thus been deemed the world’s oldest hatred. Because of its reinvention and expansion over 2,000 years in different cultures and countries, antisemitism has constantly mutated and taken on new forms. It is now a cluster of accusations and images, metastasizing throughout history, which do not cohere. Antisemitism comes from multiple directions: from far right reactionaries and white supremacists, from far-left anti-Zionists who wish the elimination of Israel, from Islamic jihadists, and from those who have a distaste for Jews socially or theologically. The IHRA definition provides an internationally accepted starting point for understanding the various manifestations of antisemitism.

 The IHRA definition covers forms of antisemitism that a university would consider uncontroversial, such as Holocaust denial and calls for physical harm against Jews. But the IHRA also recognizes that contemporary antisemitism is sometimes bound up with attacks on Israel. On university campuses one hears calls for Israel’s elimination and the return of Jews to statelessness, the likening of Israel to Nazi Germany, the demonization of Israel and its subjection to double standards (demanding that it behave in ways not expected of other democracies). Some of these attacks draw upon and reinforce antisemitic tropes and images. Some speak of child-killing by a bloodthirsty “chosen people” that cares only about itself and that forswears mercy in its compulsion to extract an “eye for an eye.” Others speak of Jewish cabals that manipulate politics with their clever words and money; the questionable loyalty of Jews to their home country of America; and the collective guilt of Jews worldwide for Israeli actions. Old antisemitic slanders are revived with “Israel” substituted for “Jew.” Israel and Zionists thus become cosmically powerful, supremely selfish malevolent forces, able to control politics, media, finance, and universities by pulling strings in the shadows and using local Jews as agents. Then there is “Holocaust inversion.” Israel, it is said, is reenacting the Warsaw Ghetto in Gaza and conducting a slow-moving genocide of Palestinians.

Outside of the university context, anti-Israel demonization has led to burnings of synagogues and assault and even murder of Jews in North America and Europe. Within university campuses, denunciations of Israel that pass beyond the wide boundaries of political speech into antisemitism are taken to justify insult to and ostracism of Jews. Here is the foundation for demands that Jews denounce their support for Israel as a price of admission to social justice organizations; for boycotts against scholars from Israel (alone among the countries of the earth); for suspicions that Jews should not serve in student government because they are too self-interested to be “fair;” and for harassment of Jews in dorms and on the street for wearing a star of David pendant, Hebrew lettering on a shirt, or a *kippah* (yarmulke or head covering).

Surveys conducted by national Jewish organizations reveal that many students hide their Jewish identities as the price of fitting in, of passing. This distinguishes the current campus experience of Jews from that of a generation ago. Members of the committee have heard firsthand from students who counsel each other not to wear clothing and jewelry that identifies them as Jews and not to reveal their identity to peers who may, in the voice of a court of inquiry, demand accountability for stereotypical Jewish misdeeds and for Israel’s crimes, real or imagined. The UIUC Campus Belonging Annual Report for 2021-22 prepared by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion summarizes 94 incidents of reported “bias-motivated behaviors.” Appendix B reveals that of the 25 incidents involving religion, 21 targeted Jews. Of the 62 incidents involving race/ethnicity, 12 aimed at Jews, a number trailing only African Americans (20), but equal to Asians (12) and greater than Latinx (3). The leading nationality targeted was Israeli (5/24), ahead of all others. A 2021 survey of Jewish undergraduates conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Hillel “found that 32 percent of Jewish students experienced antisemitism directed at them, and 79 percent of those students reported that it happened to them more than once during the last academic year. . . . In addition, 31 percent of Jewish students witnessed antisemitic activity on campus that was not directed at them. . . . Jewish students surveyed expressed concern about antisemitism from the political left, center, and right. Fifteen percent of Jewish college students reported that they felt the need to hide their Jewish identity from others on campus, and 12 percent said they had been blamed for the actions of the Israel government because they are Jewish.”[[4]](#footnote-4) The situation on campus is consistent with national reporting of bias offenses. The FBI’s annual data on hate crimes for 2021 shows that Jews, who are about 2.5% of the population, are the victims of over 50% of all religion-based crimes.[[5]](#footnote-5)

 But here is where things get fraught. Skeptics about the IHRA working definition ask: does adoption of the definition by a university limit free speech? Critics particularly target the provisions of the definition that suggest when criticism of Israel passes from political discussion into antisemitism. This is the leading concern about the IHRA definition, one that deserves full consideration.

The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and Free Speech

 The IHRA does not say that criticism of Israel is antisemitic. This is a strawman. Indeed, the text specifically provides that “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.” One may condemn in vociferous terms Israel’s politicians and policies, military operations, settlements and occupation, and the treatment of minorities. Critics of the IHRA definition who acknowledge this say that their concern is less with the text itself than with its possible implementation. It may be abused, they contend, by those who would censor controversial viewpoints.

 This is why it is so important that the IHRA definition is: (1) non-binding; (2) not intended to “outlaw” anything; and (3) not part of any disciplinary system, whether enforced by the university or the state. In practice this means that the IHRA definition has no role in regulating or censoring research, teaching, advocacy, or political debate. First Amendment rights extended by the state are not restricted or altered by university adoption of the IHRA definition. Indeed, the First Amendment allows speakers to say the most blood-chilling antisemitic statements imaginable (“the Jews are eternally guilty for killing Christ,” “Israel is the reincarnation of the Nazis,” “behind all politics you will find Jew money”). Exceptions are narrow—speech that incites imminent lawless actions that threaten bodily injury or death, or that organizes a conspiracy to commit criminal acts. The IHRA definition does not change this. Moving from the state to the university, the IHRA definition is not, and should not be, incorporated into the campus’s disciplinary code. Antisemitic claims about Jewish or Israeli wickedness would not be legally constrained. The IHRA definition does not stop anyone from engaging in political speech or action that they consider appropriate but others consider antisemitic. It does not subject them to any penalty. It does not censor or prohibit.

As a result, opponents of the IHRA definition cannot provide credible examples of students, faculty, and staff punished after its adoption and because of its adoption. (We distinguish penalties under other legal texts, such as European statutes against Holocaust denial.) Dozens of universities in the United States and hundreds in Europe have adopted the IHRA definition. Where are the cases of suppression? Opponents of the IHRA definition speak of hypotheticals and possibilities.

What the IHRA definition does do—and this is important—is clarify, for students, faculty, and administrators, what kinds of activity are to be considered antisemitic and why. It does not pretend to be a machine that spits out determinate answers. Rather, it is designed as a framework that opens up discussion about antisemitism: note the definition’s insistence that statements *could* be antisemitic depending on *context*. The IHRA definition is, ultimately, an educational tool. It is part of, but not a substitute for, long-term antisemitism awareness training and programming that would encourage an inclusive campus community.

Understanding the proper (and limited) role of the IHRA definition is important in assessing another of its critics’ allegations: that its adoption may suppress Palestinian advocacy. Palestinians and their sympathizers can describe their politics and objectives in whatever terms they like. But if some of them cross the line into antisemitism, then students and faculty have the right to object. The antisemitism long directed against Jews gives us no license to be racists. Jews are rightly criticized if we become bigots. So, too, with Palestinians and their supporters. Of course, neither the state nor university will be asked to censor or penalize their political expression. Rather, there will be counter-speech and appeals to distinguish politics from antisemitism. The IHRA definition can help explain why talk of settlements and occupation is different than talk of Zio-Nazis and Jew-money conspiracies that twist the media and government. It can help explain why demanding accountability of the Prime Minister of Israel is different than putting on moral trial the Jewish students down the hall in the dorm. In these fraught discussions, the IHRA definition can help controversialists rethink their biases—both their false negatives (missing the antisemitism in front of them) and their false positives (wrongfully accusing political speech of antisemitism). The working definition, in its educational role, helps guide discussion, not prevent it.

 In the end, whether or not to adopt the IHRA working definition is a matter of pragmatics, not legality. In a world where the United States federal government, many states and cities, and hundreds of universities and NGOs in America and Europe have endorsed the definition, and where the definition is not part of a “hate speech code” and is not a legally-binding component of state or university discipline, there is no legal barrier to our campus adopting it. The pragmatic question is this: if we do not adopt the IHRA text, then how would university administrators define antisemitism, the necessary foundation for monitoring antisemitic incidents, gathering data, and counseling students? Would each administrator have his or her own definition, with these varying widely—some being inclusive, some narrow—and many relying on scant knowledge about the various images and tropes of antisemitism? Without the guidance of the IHRA text, administrators might remain blind to manifestations of antisemitism they do not intuitively understand and have not been trained to identify. The IHRA definition provides a resource for recognizing antisemitism, the first step in refraining from it and combating it. Adoption of the IHRA definition would be a signal that the university takes antisemitism seriously and does not accept the bullying and harassment of Jews on campus.

Appendix 1: Adoptions of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

 The following information comes from the IHRA website.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**National level**

These UN member states have adopted or endorsed the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. Beyond the 38 countries listed below, a wide range of other political entities, including a large number of regional/state and local governments, have done so as well.

[Albania](http://www.ambasadat.gov.al/israel/en/albanian-parliament-thursday-passed-resolution-joining-global-efforts-combat-anti-semitism)(22 October 2020)

[Argentina](https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/230279/20200608)(4 June 2020)

[Australia](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/asia-pacific/1634188711-australia-to-adopt-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism) (13 October 2021)

[Austria](https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/bundeskanzleramt/die-bundesregierung/ministerratsprotokolle/ministerratsprotokolle-xxv-regierungsperiode/beschlussprotokoll-des-40-ministerrates-vom-25-april-2017.html)(25 April 2017)

[Belgium](https://www.senate.be/www/?MIval=/dossier&LEG=6&NR=437&LANG=fr)(14 December 2018)

[Bosnia](http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/zaklj/sjed/default.aspx?id=94626&langTag=bs-BA) (22 July 2022)

[Bulgaria](https://www.bulgaria-embassy.org/en/antisemitism/)(18 October 2017)

[Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/anti-racism-strategy.html)(27 June 2019)

[Colombia](https://antisemitism.org.il/2022/06/04/colombia-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/) (2 June 2022)

[Cyprus](http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2016.nsf/All/7BE5D64BFD05219BC22584D40048DABA?OpenDocument)(18 December 2019)

[Czech Republic](https://public.psp.cz/en/sqw/text/text2.sqw?idd=154253)(25 January 2019)

[Estonia](https://siseministeerium.ee/media/1566/download) (29 April 2021)

[Finland](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163838/VN_2022_10.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y) (17 February 2022)

[France](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/actualites-accueil-hub/lutte-contre-l-antisemitisme-adoption-d-une-proposition-de-resolution)(3 December 2019)

[Germany](https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmeldungen/DE/2017/09/definition-antisemitismus.html)(20 September 2017)

[Greece](https://primeminister.gr/2019/11/08/22507)(8 November 2019)

[Guatemala](https://agenciaajn.com/noticia/el-congreso-de-guatemala-reconocio-la-definicion-de-antisemitismo-de-la-ihra-en-homenaje-por-el-dia-del-recuerdo-161225)(27 January 2021)

[Hungary](http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungarian-government-to-promote-ihras-working-definition-of-anti-semitism/)(18 February 2019)

[Israel](https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/IsraelExperience/History/Pages/January-27-The-world-marks-International-Holocaust-Remembrance-Day.aspx)(22 January 2017)

[Italy](http://www.governo.it/it/articolo/comunicato-stampa-del-consiglio-dei-ministri-n-23/13761)(17 January 2020)

[Lithuania](https://ministraspirmininkas.lrv.lt/en/news/lithuania-to-apply-the-uniform-working-definition-of-antisemitism)(24 January 2018)

[Luxembourg](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/news-archive/luxembourg-parliament-adopts-resolution-working-definition-antisemitism) (10 July 2019)

[Moldova](https://gov.md/ro/content/condamnarea-antisemitismului-si-promovarea-tolerantei-atentia-executivului)(18 January 2019)

[Netherlands](https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2018Z22018&did=2018D56273)(27 November 2018)

[North Macedonia](https://vlada.mk/node/14238)(6 March 2018)

[Philippines](https://twitter.com/teddyboylocsin/status/1494636402050736130) (18 February 2022)

[Poland](https://www.gov.pl/web/kultura/oswiadczenie-w-sprawie-definicji-ihra) (13 October 2021)

[Portugal](https://data.dre.pt/application/conteudo/168475294) (28 July 2021)

[Romania](https://www.gov.ro/ro/stiri/romania-i-i-asuma-aplicarea-definitiei-de-lucru-a-antisemitismului-adoptata-de-alianta-internationala-pentru-memoria-holocaustului)(25 May 2017)

[Serbia](http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/pres-servis/saopstenja/22538-2020-06-01-08-30-18?lang=lat)(26 February 2020)

[Slovakia](https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=udalosti/udalost&MasterID=54835)(28 November 2018)

[Slovenia](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/Submissions/SLOVENIA_OfficialResponse.pdf)(20 December 2018)

[South Korea](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=321795&srchFr=&amp;srchTo=&amp;srchWord=&amp;srchTp=&amp;multi_itm_seq=0&amp;itm_seq_1=0&amp;itm_seq_2=0&amp;company_cd=&amp;company_nm=&page=1&titleNm) (4 August 2021)

[Spain](https://www.mpr.gob.es/prencom/notas/Paginas/2020/220720-calvo.aspx)(22 July 2020)

[Sweden](https://www.government.se/opinion-pieces/2020/01/opinion-piece/)(21 January 2020)

[United Kingdom](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-leads-the-way-in-tackling-anti-semitism)(12 December 2016)

[United States](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/12/16/2019-27217/combating-anti-semitism)(11 December 2019)

[Uruguay](https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-relaciones-exteriores/comunicacion/noticias/0520-recordar-holocausto-combatiendo-antisemitismo)(27 January 2020)

**Organizations**

The following international organizations have expressed support for the working definition of antisemitism:

**United Nations**

* [Secretary General Antonio Guterres](https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19252.doc.htm) acknowledged the efforts of the IHRA Member Countries to agree on a common definition of antisemitism and underlined that it could serve as a basis for law enforcement, as well as preventive policies.
* [Special Rapporteur for freedom of religion or belief Ahmed Shaheed](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/ActionPlanChanges-May2022.pdf) recommended that governments use the IHRA working definition of antisemitism as a non-legally binding educational and training tool and ensure it is incorporated, together with relevant human rights standards-based guidance on protecting freedom of opinion and expression, into training and educational materials for all public officials, such as police, prosecutors, and judges, government employees, educators, and national human rights institutions, and integrated into diversity inclusion programs.

**European Union**

* [Council](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/12/06/fight-against-antisemitism-council-declaration/) and [Parliament](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2017-0243&language=EN&ring=B8-2017-0383) called on Member States that had not done so already to endorse the non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism employed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) as a useful guidance tool in education and training, including for law enforcement authorities in their efforts to identify and investigate antisemitic attacks more efficiently and effectively.
* [Commission](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/schinas/announcements/keynote-address-vice-president-schinas-online-conference-working-together-fight-antisemitism-europe_en) highlighted the working definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance as the benchmark for developing a victim-centered approach and urged for its adoption.

**Organization of American States**

* [Secretary General Luis Almagro](https://twitter.com/Almagro_OEA2015/status/1135966386302459906?s=20) asked every member state to adopt the working definition and announced it would be employed to guide OAS work.

**Council of Europe**

* [European Commission against Racism and Intolerance](https://rm.coe.int/opinion-ecri-on-ihra-wd-on-antisemitism-2755-7610-7522-1/1680a091dd) welcomed the non-legally binding IHRA working definition of antisemitism in the sense that it aids and promotes a better understanding of antisemitism. It considered that it can be a positive tool and encouraged Council of Europe member states to take it into account, in particular in the areas of data collection, education, and awareness-raising.

**Universities**

 The American Jewish Committee has tracked university adoptions of the IHRA working definition.[[7]](#footnote-7) They report:

The following colleges’ and universities’ student governments have passed legislation endorsing the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism (as of May 2021):

1. **Arizona State University**, Tempe, AZ (September 2020)
2. **Brooklyn College**, New York, NY (November 2020)
3. **California Polytechnic State University**, San Luis Obispo, CA (April 2021)
4. **California State University, Northridge** (CSUN), Los Angeles, CA (December 2020)
5. **Chapman University**, Orange, CA (May 2017)
6. **City College of New York**, New York, NY (November 2020)
7. **East Carolina University**, Greenville, NC (February 2017)
8. **Florida State University**, Tallahassee, FL (July 2020)
9. **Foothill College**, Los Altos Hills, CA (October 2020)
10. **Indiana University**, Bloomington, IN (December 2018)
11. **Kennesaw State University**, Kennesaw, GA (March 2021)
12. **Northeastern University**, Boston, MA (November 2020)
13. **Pace University**, New York, NY (October 2020)
14. **Pennsylvania State University**, State College, PA (April 2021)
15. **San Diego State University**, San Diego, CA (April 2017)
16. **St. Lawrence University**, Canton, NY (November 2020)
17. **Stanford University**, Palo Alto, CA (February 2019)
18. **Syracuse University**, Syracuse, NY (March 2021)
19. **Texas A & M University**,College Station, TX (September 2020)
20. **University of California, Los Angeles**, Los Angeles, CA (March 2015)
21. **University of California, San Diego**, San Diego, CA (February 2021)
22. **University of California, Santa Barbara**, Santa Barbara, CA (February 2021)
23. **University of Georgia**, Athens, GA (January 2021)
24. **University of Iowa**, Iowa City, IA (May 2021)
25. **University of Minnesota**, Minneapolis, MN (March 2021)
26. **University of Notre Dame**, South Bend, IN (April 2021)
27. **University of Texas at Austin**, Austin, TX (March 2021)
28. **University of Texas at San Antonio**, San Antonio, TX (April 2021)
29. **University of Wisconsin**, Madison, Madison, WI (September 2017)
30. **Wake Forest University**, Winston-Salem, NC (December 2018)

Davis Matas and Aurel Braun note the widespread adoption of the IHRA working definition in European universities.

“With rapidly burgeoning support for the definition, all the Rectors (Presidents) of Germany’s universities at the Rectors’ Conference, (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz), which represents 268 institutions of higher learning, including all 84 universities and 118 universities of applied sciences, in 2019, at the 27th General Meeting, signed on enthusiastically. Crucially, in their joint resolution they [declared](https://www.hrk.de/resolutions%20publications/resolutions/beschluss/detail/no%20place%20for%20anti%20semitism/) that, ‘The definition of antisemitism provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which is also recognised by the Federal Government, provides a clear foundation for recognizing hatred towards Jews.’ They added that, ‘The member universities of the German Rectors’ Conference emphatically welcome this definition of antisemitism’ and that, ‘It is used in their institutions and is communicated to members.’”

“In the United Kingdom, the Office for Students [reported](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news%20blog%20and%20events/press%20and%20media/ofs%20reports%20significant%20increase%20in%20universities%20signing%20up%20to%20ihra%20definition%20of%20antisemitism/) in November 2021 that over 200 universities, colleges and higher education providers had adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism, including 95 universities, representing the vast majority of the institutions of higher learning. The universities include Oxford, Cambridge, the London School of Economics and Imperial College. On its website, Oxford [states](https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/antisemitism) resolutely that, ‘The IHRA definition does not affect the legal definition of racial discrimination, so does not change our approach to meeting our legal duties and responsibilities, including the University’s commitment to uphold freedom of speech.’”[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d3006107-519b-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ADL: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/about-ihra-working-definition-antisemitism> AJC: <https://www.ajc.org/the-working-definition-of-antisemitism>. The AEN leadership team endosed the IHRA definition as a “useful educational tool” rather than a “hate speech code” in a February 5, 2021 email to members. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/one-third-jewish-students-experienced-antisemitism-college-campuses-last> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. These figures come fromt an Anti-Defamation League (ADL) summary of FBI hate crime data. <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/six-facts-about-threats-jewish-community> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism/adoption-endorsement> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.ajc.org/us-campus-adoption-of-the-working-definition> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Davis Matas and Aurel Braun, “Rejecting IHRA: The Avoidable Debacle at the University of Toronto,” Fathom (online journal), February 2022. <https://fathomjournal.org/rejecting-ihra-the-avoidable-debacle-at-the-university-of-toronto/?highlight=ihra> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)