Lilach Marom

# A Bug or a Feature? The Marginalization of Jewish Identity and Antisemitism in the EDI Landscape of Canadian Higher Education

## Abstract

*This paper examines the construction of antisemitism and Jewish identity within equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) frameworks in Canadian higher education (HE). Using mixed-methods data from a national survey and semi-structured interviews, it explores how Jewish faculty and staff perceive the treatment of Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI policies, resources, and action plans in Canadian HE. Survey results show low awareness and comprehensiveness of EDI and institutional policies about Jewish identity and antisemitism, and low satisfaction with institutional responses and support. The interview data further elaborates on experiences of dismissal and avoidance and points to the conditional recognition of Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI. Overall, the study suggests that antisemitism is missing or marginalized in policies and that Jewish identity is only partially recognized. The study positions this marginalization as a feature of EDI and urges institutions to engage meaningfully with these frameworks to make them more inclusive.*

## Résumé

*Cet article examine la construction de l'antisémitisme et de l'identité juive dans les cadres du programme d'équité, de diversité et d'inclusion (EDI) de l'enseignement supérieur canadien. À partir de données recueillies par méthodes mixtes (enquête nationale et entrevues semi-structurées), il explore la perception du personnel enseignant et administratif juif quant au traitement de l'identité juive et de l'antisémitisme dans les politiques, les ressources et les plans d'action EDI de l'enseignement supérieur canadien. Les résultats de l'enquête révèlent une faible connaissance et une compréhension superficielle des politiques EDI et institutionnelles relatives à l'identité juive et à l'antisémitisme, ainsi qu'une faible satisfaction à l'égard des réponses et du soutien institutionnels. Les données des entrevues mettent en lumière des expériences de rejet et d'évitement et soulignent la reconnaissance conditionnelle de l'identité juive et de l'antisémitisme dans le cadre de l'EDI. En conclusion, l'étude suggère que l'antisémitisme est absent ou marginalisé dans les politiques et que l'identité juive n'est que partiellement reconnue. L'étude considère cette marginalisation comme une caractéristique de l'EDI et exhorte les institutions à s'engager de manière significative dans ces cadres afin de les rendre plus inclusifs.*

This study centres the voices of Jewish Canadian faculty members and staff as they navigate the contemporary landscape of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in Canadian higher education. Drawing on a mixed methods design that includes a national survey of approximately 218 faculty and staff and sixty-three in-depth interviews, the paper examines how Jewish identity and antisemitism are addressed within university EDI policies, offices, and institutional responses, particularly in the period following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 (hereafter October 7).

Rather than treating EDI as a moral framework, this paper interrogates it as an institutional technology of governance, asking what it enables, what it constrains, and what tensions emerge when applied to Jewish experiences in Canadian universities.[1]

EDI has been widely adopted as a central organizing framework through which higher education institutions in Canada articulate commitments to fairness, representation, and social justice.[2] In broad terms, equity seeks to address structural barriers that constrain access to educational opportunities and career advancement, challenging assumptions of a level playing field and the claim that equal treatment alone is sufficient for social mobility. It proposes that much of what universities call "merit" is the accumulation of advantages beyond individual control and, therefore, universities should address educational and structural disparities. Diversity recognizes difference as a defining feature of contemporary societies and institutions, encompassing intersecting identities, social positions, and lived experiences. Inclusion focuses on how diversity is actively taken up within institutions, emphasizing participation, belonging, and the conditions under which individuals and groups can contribute fully to academic life.[3] Together, these concepts signal a transition from viewing universities as a neutral site of knowledge production to understanding them as social institutions shaped by Western, Eurocentric, and colonial histories and their ongoing legacies.[4] A substantial body of research has documented persistent inequities in access, participation, and outcomes for students from historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized groups (HPSM), as well as enduring barriers in hiring, retention, and advancement for faculty from HPSM groups.[5]

Contemporary EDI frameworks can be traced to initiatives such as the Athena SWAN Charter in the United Kingdom, which initially focused on gender inequities in academic careers and institutional cultures.[6] Over time, the scope of EDI expanded to address multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization, taking on different terminology and emphases across national contexts.[7] EDI principles also underpin global policy agendas, including UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4, which commits to "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education."[8]

Following the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its ninety-four Calls to Action, decolonization has increasingly been articulated as a necessary extension of EDI frameworks, particularly in settler-colonial contexts such as Canada.[9] Decolonizing approaches foreground the enduring impacts of colonialism and the ways educational institutions have privileged Western epistemologies while marginalizing Indigenous knowledge systems.[10] This perspective urges institutions to confront the structural and epistemic foundations of Eurocentric dominance and to engage meaningfully with questions of Indigenous sovereignty, relationships to land, and knowledge production.[11] Whether decolonization should be folded into EDI or positioned as a distinct and more radical framework remains a subject of

debate.[12] Nevertheless, institutional and policy discourse has increasingly collapsed these conversations under the umbrella term EDI/D (or D/EDI).[13]

In Canada, EDI is legally linked to protected categories under the Employment Equity Act (1985), including women, visible minorities, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities.[14] The federal government has positioned EDI as a priority across the public sector, with direct implications for research funding and institutional accountability mechanisms such as the Dimensions program and the Canada Research Chairs program.[15] In response, most Canadian universities have adopted EDI policies and embedded EDI principles within strategic plans, hiring practices, and governance structures, positioning EDI simultaneously as a moral commitment and a marker of institutional excellence.[16]

At the same time, critical scholars have cautioned that EDI can operate as a mode of institutional governance that manages, contains, or neutralizes more radical critiques of power.[17] Rather than transforming underlying structures, EDI initiatives may prioritize symbolic gestures and performative forms of recognition that leave colonial, racial, and geopolitical hierarchies largely intact.[18] In parallel, EDI has become the target of growing political backlash, particularly from the political right, where it is framed as ideologically driven and as a threat to academic freedom and research excellence.[19] Beyond ideologically motivated critique, scholars are increasingly calling for change or revision in EDI, demonstrating that the current model can lead to excessive bureaucracy, increased divisions, and limited progress in addressing structural inequalities.[20]

Within this contested terrain, the place of Jewish identity and antisemitism in EDI frameworks remains undertheorized and empirically underexamined. Recent research examining EDI policies in Canadian universities suggests that Jewishness is often narrowly constructed as a religious affiliation rather than as an ethnic and cultural identity, and that antisemitism and Jewish identity are frequently absent from EDI policies and institutional resources.[21] When acknowledged, antisemitism is often addressed through generalized diversity language that obscures its specific nature and manifestations. Emerging scholarship, particularly since October 7, points to the uneasy fit of Jewish experiences within EDI frameworks that are primarily organized around race, visibility, and underrepresentation.[22] In the Canadian context, additional tensions arise when settler–colonial and Indigeneity frameworks intersect with debates surrounding Israel/Palestine.[23] At the same time, accusations of antisemitism have been mobilized by political actors, particularly in the United States, as tools to dismantle EDI initiatives altogether.[24]

These dynamics raise fundamental questions about whose identities and experiences are included within institutional EDI frameworks, and under what conditions.[25]

Centring the experiences of Jewish members of Canadian higher education institutions, this paper asks: How do Jewish faculty and staff perceive the treatment of Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI policies, resources, and action plans in Canadian higher education? How do they experience and perceive institutional EDI responses to antisemitism and Jewish concerns following October 7?

To respond to these questions, it is important to clarify how the terms Jewish identity, antisemitism, and Zionism are used in this paper. Jewish identity is understood here as a form of peoplehood—a social group formation predating modern categories of race, ethnicity, and religion, and encompassing ethnic, cultural, religious, and secular dimensions with diverse lineages and no single essentialized definition.[26] Antisemitism is understood as hostility toward Jews as Jews—an adaptive, dynamic phenomenon that has shifted in form across historical and societal contexts.[27] Zionism is understood here broadly as support for Jewish political self-determination—a position embraced by the majority of Canadian Jews.[28]

Drawing on EDI both as an analytic lens and a policy frame, the article highlights the limitations of the current framework, pointing to sites of omission and friction. In doing so, it aims to contribute to broader scholarly conversations about EDI in higher education and argues for institutional approaches that are more attentive to the complexity of marginalization and more capable of fostering genuinely inclusive academic environments.

## EDI in Canadian Higher Education

In the Canadian education context, early references to diversity and inclusion were largely articulated through the policy frameworks of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Canada was the first country to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy, promoting a national narrative that framed diversity as a cultural asset and marker of societal strength.[29] While this model foregrounded the recognition of cultural difference, critics have long argued that Canadian multiculturalism operates as a limited liberal framework that emphasizes the "celebration of diversity" while leaving underlying relations of power, racial hierarchies, and structural inequality largely unexamined.[30]

Over the past decade, Canadian higher education has experienced a notable shift from multicultural discourses toward more critical frameworks, particularly following the TRC's Calls to Action.[31] The TRC explicitly positioned postsecondary institutions as key sites for addressing the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism, calling for structural changes in the curriculum, pedagogy, leadership, research practices, and relationships with Indigenous communities. This emphasis on Indigenization and decolonization has become a defining feature, at least declaratively, of the contemporary Canadian higher education landscape.[32]

The institutionalization of EDI in Canadian higher education has been significantly shaped by federal policy instruments tied to research funding and accountability. In 2019, the Government of Canada launched the Dimensions program, requiring postsecondary institutions to develop, implement, and publicly report on EDI action plans as a condition of participation. Although the program was initially paused following its pilot phase, it was subsequently renewed and expanded, further consolidating EDI as a governance mechanism linked to research excellence, institutional reputation, and access to federal funding.[33]

Parallel initiatives have reinforced this trajectory. The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences introduced a Charter on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDID), calling for "a more resolute effort to achieve equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization in our disciplines, fields of inquiry, and artistic and cultural expressions."[34] Similarly, the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program incorporated EDI into its allocation processes, explicitly acknowledging longstanding inequities in the distribution of academic prestige and research resources.[35] These initiatives positioned EDI as a normative expectation within Canadian higher education governance. In addition, the racial reckoning that followed the murder of George Floyd in the United States and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement triggered a growing awareness of anti-Black racism in the Canadian higher education context.[36] In response, many institutions signed the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education.[37] The Charter frames anti-Black racism as a structural problem requiring coordinated and sustained institutional action.

At the same time, a growing body of scholarship cautions that the rapid uptake of EDI risks prioritizing discursive commitment and symbolic gestures over structural transformation.[38] Carol Campbell criticizes the focus on individual behaviour rather than structural change, the oversimplification of EDI to appease stakeholders, the assumption that discrimination is no longer a significant issue, and the avoidance of divisive topics.[39] Vicki Squires and colleagues show that across Canada's U15 research-intensive universities, EDI has become a normalized institutional expectation driven by federal funding, public discourses, and reputational incentives.[40] However, their analysis also documents persistent challenges in translating EDI commitments into practice, including definitional ambiguity, uneven implementation across institutions and departments, and a tendency toward performative actions rather than systemic change. Similarly, in a study of EDI documents in Canadian colleges, Merli Tamtik and Puvi Balasubramaniam find substantial variability in the definitions and uses of EDI, leading to the conclusion that the understanding of EDI within institutions is fragmented, vague, and incomplete.[41] This situation can serve to reinforce and perpetuate existing power structures rather than dismantle and disrupt them.

These findings align closely with those of the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) report on EDI in postsecondary education.[42] While the report documents substantial growth in EDI policies, offices, and reporting mechanisms, it also highlights persistent resistance within institutions, significant gaps in data collection, unequal division of labour, and a lack of consistent evidence to assess the effectiveness of EDI initiatives or identify best practices. The CCA emphasizes that without robust data, clear accountability structures, and sustained institutional commitment, EDI risks remaining an aspirational framework rather than a driver of meaningful change.

At the same time, the scholarly pushback against EDI has gained a stronger voice, as evidenced in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research, convened to examine how EDI criteria in federal funding affect research excellence.[43] In the hearings, some prominent scholars argued that EDI criteria in research grants endanger academic freedom and undermine merit.[44] Similarly, scholarly organizations such as Heterodox Academy, which centre viewpoint diversity, and initiatives promoting civil discourse and dialogue are gaining growing support on university campuses and are increasingly positioned as alternatives to EDI.[45]

Overall, the literature illustrates how EDI has become deeply embedded in the governance of Canadian higher education while remaining marked by tensions between discursive uptake, structural transformation, and growing pushback. This institutional context provides an important backdrop for examining how Jews as an identity group and antisemitism as a form of marginalization are recognized, addressed, or sidelined within contemporary EDI frameworks that are already complex and contested.

## Jewish Identity and Antisemitism in Higher Education

Recent scholarship on Jewish identity and antisemitism in higher education is relatively limited and is concentrated primarily on students, often in the United States. Warren J. Blumenfeld and Jason R. Klein describe how Jewish undergraduates were overlooked and misunderstood by campus administrators and faculty. They argue that Jewish students, most of them of Ashkenazi descent, faced unique challenges emerging from being afforded White-skinned privilege while also carrying a collective sense of racialization and persecution.[46] In a more recent study on faculty, staff, and students, Barry A. Farber and Arielle Poleg argue that as universities expand their multicultural and equity programming, Jews are paradoxically less likely to be recognized as a group deserving institutional attention.[47] Similarly, Benjamin S. Selznick and Sandra Greene conceptualize Jewish identity on campus as simultaneously privileged and vulnerable, visible and invisible, a positioning that sits uneasily within equity frameworks organized around fixed categories.[48] They conclude that "it is important for Jewishness as an identity space to be fully recognized and valued by colleges and universities."[49]

Steven Feldman maps how Jewish identity and antisemitism were treated across five top journals in higher education over fifty years and assesses how authors frame Jewishness when it appears. He argues that scholarship marginalizes the ethno-racial dimensions of Jewishness, treats Jewishness mainly as religion, and rarely centres Jewish experiences.[50]

Similarly, antisemitism is largely missing in anti-racism and anti-bias education and programming.[51] Laura Vernikoff and colleagues show that even teacher educators committed to anti-oppressive pedagogy often omit Jewish identity and antisemitism from curricula.[52] The authors argue that:

> American Jews may also be categorized as a religious group instead of, or in addition to, a racial or ethnic group … Teacher preparation, in particular, and higher education, in general, often ignore religion and religious discrimination when addressing cultural diversity, thus allowing biases, discrimination, and Christian normativity to continue unchecked.[53]

In Canada, Ayelet Kuper argues that antisemitism at the University of Toronto is treated as episodic, external, or political rather than as a structural feature of campus life. She documents multiple forms of institutional silencing, including the exclusion of Jews from data collection instruments and curricular of antisemitism. She argues that Jewish experiences are overlooked within institutional EDI logics.[54]

October 7 and its aftermath have led to a renewed interest in scholarship on Jewish campus experiences.[55] Talia Morstead and Anita DeLongis examine how stress related to antisemitism and the Israel/Palestine conflict, as well as different coping strategies, were associated with depressive symptoms in Jewish university students.[56] They argue that "institutional responses that downplay [antisemitism's] existence or stifle speech about its impacts may inadvertently worsen outcomes for affected students."[57] Similarly, drawing on a taxonomy of microaggressions, Yael Silverstein and Caryn Block argue that subtle, everyday forms of antisemitism on campuses often go unrecognized and unreported, yet are pervasive and harmful. Jews were often excluded from campus diversity spaces, had the legitimacy of their identity questioned, and their experiences dismissed and ignored.[58] The authors argue that there are "strong correlations between antisemitic experiences and race-based traumatic stress symptoms, explicitly linking Jewish microaggressions with other forms of minority stress."[59] Miri Bar-Halpern and Jaclyn Wolfman describe "traumatic invalidation," whereby Jewish expressions of fear or exclusion are minimized or dismissed. They describe an expectation on campus that Jewish students disavow Israel to gain social acceptance.[60] The authors conclude that university administrations and EDI offices failed to adequately acknowledge, validate, or protect Jewish individuals on campuses. Specific institutional reports from prominent universities similarly underscore failures of EDI offices to respond to and address Jewish concerns. For ex-

ample, Columbia's Task Force on Antisemitism reports that:

> Many students thought that the main address for these complaints was the offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). However, DEI offices … have generally not engaged Jewish student complaints. In our survey of the various websites, programs, and discussions offered by each of the DEI offices … we found only one that mentioned antisemitism.[61]

Similarly, the final report of Harvard's Presidential Task Force on Combating Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias maintains that "many Jewish respondents feel that DEI offices are not able to satisfactorily engage with Jews as a minority group. Some would like DEI offices to improve their engagement with Jewish community members. Others would like to see DEI programs wound down."[62]

While some scholars call for the dismantling of EDI altogether, emerging scholarship calls for an expansion and revision of EDI to include Jewish identity and antisemitism, suggesting different strategies and pedagogies.[63] This paper aims to contribute to this emerging literature by focusing on the Canadian higher education context.

## Methodology

The data presented here are part of a larger mixed-methods research project examining the experiences of faculty and staff in Canadian higher education in the period following October 7.[64] The broader project includes three interconnected components: policy analysis, a national survey, and semi-structured interviews. This article focuses specifically on survey and interview data related to EDI with particular attention to how Jewish identity and antisemitism are recognized and addressed within these institutional frameworks.

Participants were recruited through Jewish campus organizations, Jewish academic and professional networks, Canadian Jewish organizations, and Jewish studies associations. Recruitment also relied on the professional networks of the research team and snowball sampling to reach participants across institutions, roles, and regions. Eligibility criteria included being faculty or staff at a Canadian higher education institution and having knowledge of, experience with, or exposure to antisemitism on campus. While the broader survey was open to both Jewish and non-Jewish respondents, the analytic sample for this paper focuses on Jewish respondents (153 out of 218), consistent with EDI approaches that centre the voices of those directly impacted by marginalization.

The survey was designed and administered using the Qualtrics platform and hosted on a secure University of British Columbia server. The first section collected professional and institutional background information (e.g., role, discipline, institution type, and province). Subsequent sections focused on participants' awareness of and engagement with university policies and EDI offices, including perceptions of whether antisemitism and Jewish identity were explicitly addressed and how comprehensive (i.e., relevant, effective, having a positive effect, and capturing the right things) such efforts were relative to other forms of discrimination. Additional items assessed exposure to antisemitic incidents before and after October 7, reporting behaviour in response to incidents, and perceived institutional responses to reports. A dedicated section addressed Jewish identity for respondents who identified as Jewish, including dimensions of cultural, ethnic, and religious identification, as well as emotional attachment to Israel. This section also included items assessing participants' sense of physical, emotional, and professional safety, as well as feelings of inclusion on campus. The final section collected demographic information (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation). In this paper, only survey items related to EDI are presented.[65] For survey questions included in this paper, see Appendix A.

At the end of the survey, participants were invited to indicate interest in a follow-up semi-structured interview. Interviews are conceptualized here as Jewish counterstories, aimed at fostering more accurate and equitable discourse on antisemitism and Jewish inclusion in higher education.[66] Interviews included open-ended questions about Jewish identity, understandings of antisemitism, and experiences with colleagues, students, and campus leadership before and after October 7. A dedicated portion of each interview focused on participants' interactions with EDI policies, offices, resources, and institutional responses, as well as their understanding and perceptions of Jewish identity and antisemitism within their institutions. Participants selected or were assigned pseudonyms and were invited to review and edit their transcripts before analysis, to ensure their voices and confidentiality were maintained.

## Data Sources

The survey remained open for approximately five months and yielded 218 responses. After data cleaning and eligibility screening, including the removal of incomplete responses, ineligible respondents, and duplicate entries, 149 responses met the inclusion criteria. A further thirteen responses were excluded from the primary analytic sample due to failure of an attention check item, resulting in a strict analytic sample of 136 respondents. These thirteen cases were retained in a relaxed analytic sample ($N = 149$) used exclusively for sensitivity analyses. Across all variables reported in this paper, descriptive patterns were substantively consistent between the strict and relaxed samples, indicating that inclusion of the additional thirteen respondents

does not materially affect the results. Results are therefore presented for the strict sample unless otherwise noted.

**Table 1**
**Survey Participant Demographics**

| Demographic | Category | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age Group** | 25–44 | 28 | 20.6 |
| | 45–54 | 50 | 36.8 |
| | 55–64 | 28 | 20.6 |
| | 65+ | 23 | 16.9 |
| | Missing | 7 | 5.1 |
| **Gender** | Woman | 74 | 54.4 |
| | Man | 54 | 39.7 |
| | Other | 8 | 5.9 |
| **Province** | British Columbia | 42 | 30.9 |
| | Ontario | 60 | 44.1 |
| | Quebec | 14 | 10.3 |
| | Other (includes the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan) | 16 | 11.8 |
| | Missing | 4 | 2.9 |
| **Academic Discipline** | Humanities/Social Sciences | 47 | 34.6 |
| | Health/Medicine | 34 | 25.0 |
| | STEM | 14 | 10.3 |
| | Business/Law | 14 | 10.3 |
| | Other | 9 | 6.6 |
| | Missing | 18 | 13.2 |
| **Academic Rank** | Junior | 15 | 11.0 |
| | Mid-career | 33 | 24.3 |
| | Senior | 49 | 36.0 |
| | Other | 20 | 14.7 |
| | Missing | 19 | 14.0 |
| **Attachment to Israel** | Attached to Israel | 126 | 92.6 |
| | No Attachment/Neutral | 10 | 7.4 |
| **Strong Cultural Jewish Identity** | Very | 120 | 88.2 |
| | No/Neutral | 16 | 11.8 |
| **Strong Religious Jewish Identity** | Very | 56 | 41.2 |
| | No/Neutral | 79 | 58.1 |
| | Missing | 1 | 0.7 |
| **Strong Ethnic Jewish Identity** | Very | 112 | 82.4 |
| | No/Neutral | 24 | 17.6 |

In the strict analytic sample ($N$ = 136), 111 respondents (81.6 percent) identified as faculty, eighteen (13.2 percent) as staff, and seven (5.1 percent) as other (e.g., postdocs). Respondents were predominantly affiliated with research-intensive institutions: eighty-nine respondents (65.4 percent) were employed at U15 universities, twenty-nine (21.3 percent) at other research-intensive universities, and fourteen (10.3 percent) at teaching-focused institutions; institutional type was missing for four respondents (2.9 percent). Disciplinary backgrounds spanned multiple fields; forty-seven respondents (34.6 percent) were based in the humanities or social sciences, thirty-four (25 percent) in health or medicine, fourteen (10.3 percent) in STEM fields, and fourteen (10.3 percent) in business or law; nine respondents (6.6 percent) reported other disciplines, and eighteen (13.2 percent) did not report a disciplinary affiliation. See Table 1 for survey participant demographics.

Among Jewish survey respondents, eighty-one expressed an interest in being interviewed, resulting in fifty-nine interviews with faculty and staff. Participants varied across institutions, positions, fields, locations, career stages, political orientations, and Jewish self-identification. Given the volume of interview data, the paper includes the voices of twenty-five participants. The interview participants included faculty, staff, and other academic roles across multiple disciplines, provinces, career stages, and institution types, with most affiliated with research-intensive universities—a profile broadly consistent with the composition of the broader survey sample. The interview participants were selected to reflect the range of themes and experiences identified across the full interview dataset rather than to constitute a statistically representative subsample. See Table 2 for an overview of interview participants whose voices are included in this paper.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using R.[67] Analyses examined participants' perception of how their institutions recognize Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI frameworks and how this compares to recognition of other marginalized identities and forms of discrimination. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent demographics, institutional characteristics (e.g., institution type), and responses to EDI-related measures, including policy awareness, perceived policy comprehensiveness, EDI office resources, workplace climate, exposure to antisemitic incidents, and reporting behaviour.

Subgroup comparisons are interpreted cautiously and as descriptive patterning rather than definitive group differences, given uneven subgroup sizes and a study design not intended for causal inference or population-level estimation. These findings should not be interpreted as statistically representative of all Jewish faculty and staff in Canadian higher education; rather, they document patterns among respon-

**Table 2**
**Interview Participants Demographics**

| | Pseudonym | Position | Discipline | Gender | Province | Professorial Rank | Setting | University Type* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Adi | Faculty | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W | MB | Emeritus Professor | Urban | Research University (RU) |
| 2 | Alicia | Faculty | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W | ON | Associate Professor | Urban | RU |
| 3 | Amira | Staff | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W | BC | N/A | Urban | RU |
| 4 | Aviva | Faculty | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W | ON | Assistant Professor | Urban | RU |
| 5 | Ben | Faculty | Business | M | ON | Associate Professor | Urban | RU |
| 6 | David | Faculty | Social Sciences | M | AB | Full Professor | Urban | RU |
| 7 | Diane | Faculty | Education | W | QC | Senior Academic Associate | Urban | RU |
| 8 | Eden | Faculty | Physical Sciences | W | QC | Full Professor | Urban | RU |
| 9 | Elisheva | Staff | Library | W | SK | N/A | Urban | RU |
| 10 | Esther | Faculty | Behavioural Sciences | W | AB | Associate Professor | Urban | Teaching University (TU) |
| 11 | Etgar | Faculty | Law | M | ON | Full Professor | Urban | RU |
| 12 | Ezra | Faculty | Social Sciences | M | QC | Teaching Faculty | Urban | CEGEP |
| 13 | Joe | Faculty | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M | ON | Assistant Professor | Urban | RU |
| 14 | Josh | Staff | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M | BC | N/A | Urban | RU |
| 15 | Lane | Faculty | Business/Engineering | W | ON | Contract Professor | Urban | RU and College |
| 16 | Lila | Faculty | Behavioural Sciences | W | MB | Full Professor | Urban | RU |
| 17 | Lili | Faculty | Music | W | QC | Associate Professor | Urban | RU |
| 18 | Max | Other | Social Sciences | M | ON | Senior Fellow | Urban | RU |
| 19 | Michael | Faculty | Social Sciences | M | BC | Instructor | Urban | Comprehensive University (CU) |
| 20 | Nachman | Staff | Engineering | M | ON | N/A | Urban | RU |
| 21 | Noah | Faculty | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M | ON | Associate Professor | Urban | RU |
| 22 | Paul | Faculty | Business | M | QC | Associate Professor | Urban | RU |
| 23 | Rita | Faculty | Humanities | W | ON | Associate Professor | Urban | RU |
| 24 | Ruth | Faculty | Humanities | W | ON | Full Professor | Urban | RU |
| 25 | Yishai | Faculty | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M | ON | Associate Professor | Urban | RU |

dents who met the study criteria and chose to participate. No statistically significant differences were observed across participant demographics or affiliations (e.g., gender, position, discipline), or between institutional groups (e.g., U15) in the primary analyses. For details on the survey analysis process, see Appendix B.

Interview transcripts were analyzed using NVivo. Thematic analysis guided the coding process.[68] Members of the research team met regularly to refine the codebook, compare interpretations, and ensure analytic rigour. Themes were generated inductively from participants' narratives (e.g., experiences on campus, responses, and behaviours) and deductively informed by the EDI framework (e.g., EDI policies, discourses, and offices). In the final analytic stage, findings related to EDI were reorganized into three main themes. The first theme maps the EDI landscape of Canadian higher education, highlighting the omission and marginalization of Jewish identity and antisemitism and the baseline institutional way Jewish identity is managed via religious accommodations. The second theme identifies areas of misfit and tension around the inclusion of Jewish identity and antisemitism in EDI frameworks. The third theme points to EDI institutional strategies to manage responses to antisemitism. The findings section starts with an overview of the survey findings, followed by the qualitative sections that enhance and complement these findings.

## Survey Findings

Survey responses indicate limited institutional inclusion of antisemitism and Jewish identity within EDI policies and resources and reveal large, systematic gaps between recognition of antisemitism and recognition of other forms of identity-based discrimination. In the sample ($N$ = 136), only 32.4 percent of respondents reported awareness that their institution had a policy addressing antisemitism, compared with 93.4 percent who reported awareness of policies addressing other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Indigenous, anti-Black racism). Within-respondent paired comparisons show that eighty-three respondents were aware of policies addressing other discrimination but not antisemitism, while no respondents reported the reverse pattern (McNemar $\chi^2$ = 81.0, $p$ < .001), indicating a large and highly asymmetric awareness gap.

Perceptions of EDI office activity showed a similar pattern. On a five-point scale measuring awareness of EDI activities—with higher scores indicating greater perceived visibility—the median Jewish-focused EDI awareness score among respondents with paired ratings was 3.00 (IQR: 1.00–5.00), compared with 5.00 (IQR: 4.00–5.00) for EDI activities addressing other forms of discrimination. This difference was highly statistically significant in a paired Wilcoxon signed-rank test ($z$ = −6.39, $p$ < .001). Consistent with this result, within-person gap scores (Jewish-focused minus other-discrimination awareness) had a median of −0.50 (IQR: −2.62–0.00), indicat-

ing that respondents systematically rated Jewish-focused EDI activity as less visible than EDI activity addressing other identity groups.

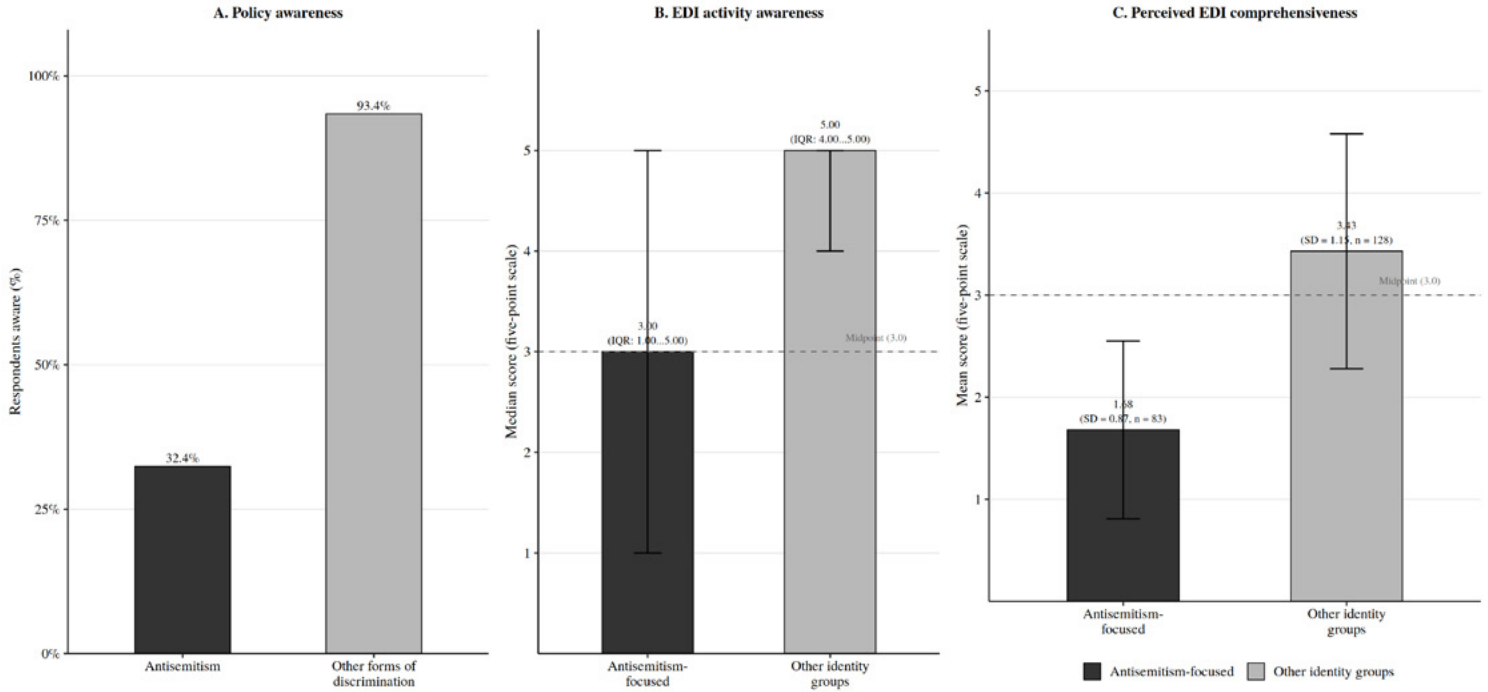
Perceived EDI activity comprehensiveness showed an even larger disparity. Jewish-focused EDI comprehensiveness averaged 1.68 ($SD$ = 0.87; $n$ = 83), while EDI comprehensiveness addressing other forms of identity-based discrimination averaged 3.43 ($SD$ = 1.15; $n$ = 128). This difference was highly statistically significant among respondents who provided paired ratings for both domains (paired Wilcoxon signed-rank test, $p < .001$). A similar pattern was observed for formal institutional policies. Among respondents who rated policy comprehensiveness across domains, antisemitism policies were rated as significantly less comprehensive than policies addressing other forms of discrimination ($p < .001$) and workplace misconduct ($p < .001$), based on paired Wilcoxon signed-rank tests.

These within-respondent comparisons indicate that the same individuals consistently evaluate antisemitism-related policies as weaker than parallel institutional frameworks. Within-person gap scores further quantify this asymmetry. The mean EDI comprehensiveness gap (Jewish-focused minus other-discrimination EDI) was approximately −1.8 points on a five-point scale, indicating a large and systematic deficit in perceived adequacy of Jewish-focused EDI efforts relative to other identity-based domains. This gap was highly statistically significant in paired analyses, demonstrating that the observed differences are not attributable to random variation or between-person differences, but reflect a robust institutional recognition gap. These results indicate that Jewish-focused EDI efforts were perceived as substantially less visible and less adequate than EDI efforts addressing other identity-based groups (see Figure 1).

Survey data further indicate substantial reporting of antisemitic incidents following October 7, alongside low perceived support and satisfaction with institutional responses. In the strict analytic sample ($N$ = 136), 57.8 percent of respondents formally reported at least one antisemitic incident since October 7, while 42.2 percent did not. Because experience with, knowledge of, or exposure to antisemitism on campus was part of the study's eligibility criteria, this finding reflects the reporting rate among respondents already connected to antisemitism-related experiences, rather than the prevalence of antisemitism among all Jewish faculty and staff. Even within this eligible sample, a substantial minority did not engage with formal reporting mechanisms.

In multivariable analyses, reporting behaviour was most consistently associated with post-October 7 exposure burden. Each additional antisemitic experience since October 7 was associated with significantly higher odds of formally reporting an incident (OR = 1.37, 95% CI: 1.11–1.78, $p$ = .008), adjusting for pre-October 7 exposure burden, recognition gaps, role, institution type, disciplinary background, and Israel attachment. Full model results are reported in Appendix C. These findings suggest

**Figure 1**
**Policy and EDI Resources Awareness and Comprehensiveness**



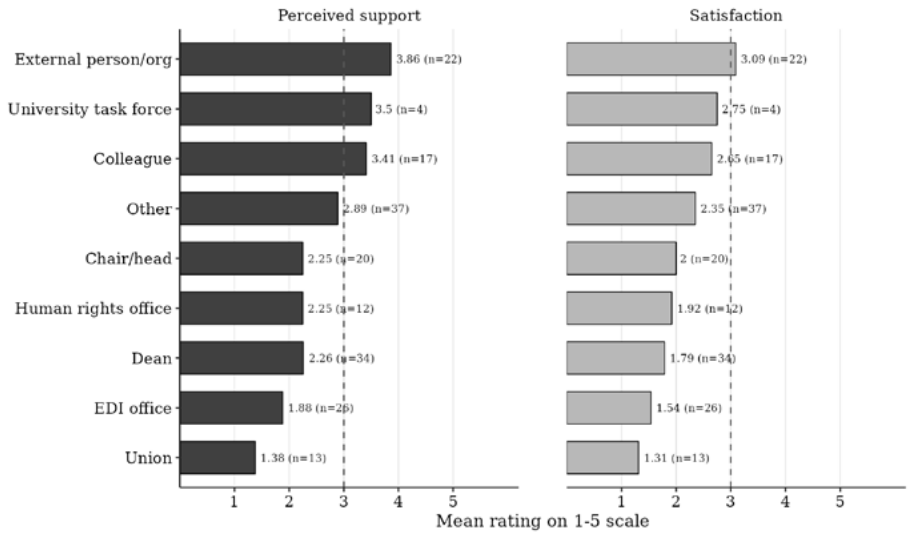

Awareness of institutional policies addressing antisemitism compared with policies addressing other forms of identity-based discrimination (strict analytic sample, N = 136). Panel A: percentage of respondents aware of institutional policies. Panel B: median EDI activity awareness score on a five-point scale; error bars indicate interquartile range (IQR). Panel C: mean perceived EDI comprehensiveness score on a five-point scale; error bars indicate one standard deviation. Dashed lines mark the scale midpoint (3.0). Percentages exclude missing responses.

that reporting was driven primarily by the cumulative burden of post-October 7 exposure rather than by institutional recognition or EDI-related factors.

Satisfaction with how reported incidents were handled was low overall. Among respondents who reported incidents, the mean satisfaction score was 2.17 on a five-point scale, below the scale midpoint of 3, interpreted here as indicating generally low satisfaction. Satisfaction varied descriptively by reporting destination: external persons or external organizations (e.g., the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs) received the highest mean satisfaction ratings (mean = 3.09), while institutional channels were rated substantially lower, including EDI offices (mean = 1.54), deans (mean = 1.79), and unions (mean = 1.31).

Perceived support following reporting showed a similar pattern. Overall mean perceived support was approximately 2.66 on a five-point scale, falling below the midpoint, reflecting moderate-to-low perceived support. External persons or organizations (mean = 3.86) and colleagues (mean = 3.41) were rated as most supportive, while institutional channels such as EDI offices (mean = 1.88), unions (mean = 1.38), and human rights offices (mean = 2.25) were rated lower. These results are intended to characterize descriptive patterns of perceived response rather than to establish statistically significant differences between reporting channels (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**
**Perceived Support and Satisfaction across Reporting Destinations**




Perceived support and satisfaction across reporting destinations, illustrating the consistently lower support and satisfaction ratings associated with institutional reporting channels relative to colleagues and external organizations. Mean rating on a five-point scale. The dashed line indicates the scale midpoint (3.0). Strict analytic sample; respondents could report to multiple destinations; n indicates number of respondents per destination.

Taken together, these findings indicate that while a majority of respondents reported incidents of antisemitism after October 7, perceived institutional responses were consistently experienced as insufficient, indicating a gap between reporting engagement and perceived effectiveness of institutional response mechanisms.

## Mapping the EDI Landscape: Missing, Marginalized, and Limitedly Accommodated

Similar to the survey findings, interview participants repeatedly described that antisemitism was rarely named or addressed as a distinct form of oppression. Rita explained:

> It's the absence. The website, for example, had a list of various underrepresented groups that the EDI office could help if you had a concern and antisemitism wasn't there … if you felt that you'd experienced racism or ableism [etc.], it is obvious where to go and who the support staff is. There's nothing on the website that says, "if you're Jewish or you've experienced antisemitism, here's where you would go."

Eden echoed this observation: "In the university-wide EDI committee, there's never a mention of antisemitism … it's anything but antisemitism." Esther agreed: "The institution has lots of stuff about EDI. Notably missing is anything about antisemitism."

When antisemitism was mentioned, it tended to appear as part of a generalized list rather than as a category that required distinct analysis or action. Lila described:

> If there's a big, long laundry list, it might include antisemitism, but there's nothing that … would help people understand what antisemitism is. Relative to [other forms] of anti-oppression … that say what it is and what you're supposed to be fighting against.

Michael added:

> The university created an anti-racism task force … and a lengthy report was published…. In the report, the first-time antisemitism is mentioned, I believe, on page seventeen or eighteen, and it's only mentioned one other time. So, to me, it suggests that antisemitism is not a priority for the task force, and it's hardly recognized, if at all.

For many participants, this institutional omission became particularly visible after October 7, when EDI offices were often silent in response to concerns about antisemitism or in expressing solidarity with Jewish members of the campus community. Etgar shared:

> They have done nothing for the Jewish community since October 7 through the auspices of the EDI office. They hadn't made any statements of support … contrasted with very vocal statements that the university made when it was the Black Lives Matter movement or the Me Too movement.… [They] know how to make [statements], and there was nothing.

Relatedly, Jewish identity was described as largely absent from, or positioned at the margins of, institutional EDI policies and resources. As Josh shared: "I've never seen anything mentioned in writing about any Jewish holiday." When Jewish identity was acknowledged, it was most often framed narrowly as a matter of religion rather than as a social, cultural, or ethnic identity.[69] Ruth illustrated how this logic was operationalized in practice when asking whether Jewish students were included in a graduate mentorship program:

> I got a reply from the inclusion advisor of the Graduate Faculty … [that the mentorship program] was organized specifically for equity-deserving groups, namely, Black, Indigenous, and people of colour, and that if Jewish students felt they needed mentorship, they could go and see the multi-faith team.

Here, Jewish students were effectively displaced from EDI and redirected into religious services, reinforcing the idea that Jewish concerns fall outside institutional EDI mandates.

Indeed, the most common institutional response to Jewish identity was through religious accommodation. Participants emphasized, however, that even these accommodations were uneven and often required individual negotiation. Rita shared: "Every year, I feel like I have to fight to get my colleagues not to schedule a department meeting on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur." Esther connected this pattern directly to exclusion from professional participation:

> Throughout my fourteen years here, we have had faculty council and faculty association meetings and retreats scheduled on High Holidays. Anytime I have mentioned it, I'm always told, "You don't have to come." I'm like, "You're taking away my ability to participate in doing my job."

Joe described how this extends into student life and campus services:

> [Students are] required to have a meal plan, but there's no kosher meal plan … The [faculty] puts significant milestone events on Jewish holidays regularly, despite us having a multi-faith calendar.… It's those subtle things that most of us … tend to just accept.

Lili reiterated how a similar pattern underlies EDI-designated spaces: "I was in an EDI meeting, and I said, 'we're rescheduling the next meeting' [because it was on Friday evening]…. Some people were visibly annoyed, and I just thought, 'This is an EDI meeting, what's going on here?'"

These accounts point to a form of "double exclusion." Canadian higher education is still grounded in Christian calendars and norms as the default, while EDI frameworks—intended to disrupt such defaults—often overlook Jewish identity.[70]

At the same time, interviews revealed variation across institutions and contexts. Some participants described being accommodated at the individual level. Paul shared: "It wasn't uncommon to have various administrative meetings scheduled on High Holidays, and I just say, 'I'm not going to be available,' and they're like, 'oh, no problem, we'll reschedule it.'" Yet only a few participants, typically in universities with a larger Jewish population, described a clear institutional-level commitment to accommodation, as Diane noted: "I cannot imagine any university meeting of consequence being scheduled on Rosh Hashanah. There would be such an outcry, and that predates October 7."

These accounts suggest that Jewish religious accommodation, in most cases, is informal and situation-specific rather than systematic or tied to EDI accountability. Overall, the findings map an EDI landscape in which Jewish identity and antisemitism are weakly embedded in institutional policy and EDI infrastructures, narrowly framed through religion when acknowledged, and addressed primarily through individualized accommodation rather than through systematic EDI recognition and accountability.

## Structural Misfit: Jewish Identity and Antisemitism Within EDI

Interview data illuminate how the recognition gap identified in the survey findings is produced for Jewish identity and antisemitism within the EDI context. Participants described Jewish identity and antisemitism as misfitting within existing EDI frameworks. They frequently pointed to structural features of EDI—particularly the centrality of racialization and underrepresentation—as creating barriers to recognition. Several participants encountered this misfit through institutional classification systems, such as surveys and demographic forms, where Jewish identity was absent. Yishai explained:

> If you ask Jews who they are differently, half of them disappear. That's been known to Canadian demographers for over fifteen years. That [problem] persists in EDI policies. So, Jews are made to disappear in multiple ways. From anchoring

> EDI policies and related data collection in race to the overt exclusion of religion, ancestry, or ethnicity.

Ruth shared a concrete experience: "I looked at the registration form, and it had this long list where you could identify yourself. … It's quite a lengthy list, and Jewish wasn't on it."

Eden articulated the rationale she believed underpinned these omissions:

> I look at the form, and I think, "OK, what are these people who make these forms thinking? Why would they not include Jewish?" I guess they would argue that Jews are overrepresented in academia and in research, and they mean to track underrepresented groups … and I don't think I could argue against Jews being overrepresented in academia.

This logic—equating EDI primarily with underrepresentation—was widely recognized by participants, even when they experienced its consequences as exclusionary. Nachman noted:

> If the goal of EDI is to mitigate underrepresentation … there's no diversity argument to be made to push more Jewish inclusion because the Jews are already overrepresented, but from a fairness and inclusion point of view, if you see things that … antagonize the Jewish community … you would expect there to be some kind of statement, and there isn't.

Although Jews in Canada have historically faced exclusion and quotas in universities, participants emphasized that Jews today are not underrepresented in academia.[71] This tension raised questions about how recognition and inclusion might be claimed without forcing Jews into the conceptual box of representation that structures EDI.

A related source of tension concerned the limits of EDI frameworks in addressing forms of discrimination that do not map neatly onto dominant categories such as race and gender. Yishai observed: "Understanding antisemitism, engaging with antisemitism, or even contemplating forms of discrimination that aren't based in race, sexual identity, or gender is impossible within those policies." Since Jewishness was seen mainly as a form of religious identification, which is not centred in EDI, it was further marginalized.[72] As Amira explained: "[I was told] 'Jews are not included because it's a faith and there are no faith-based discrimination policies.' I would say: 'It's not just a faith; it's also an ethnicity and a minority.'"

Participants also described Jews as being perceived through the lens of Whiteness and privilege, further complicating EDI recognition.[73] Etgar asked: "If you're listing

all kinds of identities … why would you not list Jewish as an identity? … Why is that one group not included? Are they conflated with Whites?" David added:

> I don't know what accident of history gave me White skin, and I understand that it allows me—not that I want to pass—but it allows me to pass. In a group of White people, I don't stand out. But I don't feel like they do; my history is not theirs.

Diane agreed:

> Many EDI initiatives are inherently non-inclusive, and they certainly do not include Jewish people. [The university] has identified equity groups. Jews are not among them. Jews are considered White and privileged.… It doesn't include me. It doesn't recognize that I am a minority.

October 7 has made this omission painfully visible, as Etgar described: "Jews have not been one of the groups that should be beneficiaries of EDI policies. The frameworks that were set up to support all kinds of equity-deserving groups were not there to support Jews post-October 7."

At the same time, participants expressed ambivalence about simply inserting Jewish experiences into existing EDI categories. Several emphasized that inclusion should not come at the cost of flattening differences or appropriating spaces designed to address other forms of marginalization. Max reflected: "The idea that … we should be the beneficiaries of EDI, I don't know. I'm not sure." Ben elaborated:

> I wouldn't want us to equate our experiences with people who are visibly diverse… My Black colleague faces racism that I don't experience.… She gets judged based on what she looks like, and we don't.… That's the challenge I have with us being part of the EDI. I don't really feel like it's my space to be in, even though I know it has to be.

Joe pointed out the reason many Jews are ambivalent about being identified by racial categorization:

> The erasure is that [EDI] conceptualizes Jews as a religious group, and perhaps as a cultural group, but they don't include us as a racial [group] … and this is partially about how Jews did not want to be racialized. We were exterminated for being racialized.

Overall, these findings show that Jewish identity and antisemitism sit uneasily within EDI frameworks structured around racialization and underrepresentation. While

participants often recognized the intent and value of EDI, they also identified its conceptual limits and expressed ambivalence about claiming inclusion on terms that do not fully reflect Jewish experiences and needs.

## Managing Antisemitism: Dismissal and Conditional Recognition Within EDI

In alignment with low satisfaction from leadership and EDI office responses reported in the survey, many interviewees described overt dismissal, silence, or procedural deflection when they reached out to EDI offices for support. Elisheva shared:

> I haven't heard a single peep from EDI.... I just consider them a write-off, to be quite honest. We've definitely reached out, and they just say, "There's nothing we can do," but they never give an explanation as to why.

Ben reiterated, "when antisemitic issues had come up, I directed it to the Vice President of EDI. They didn't do anything. In fact, I don't think they care; I think they want to just sweep it under the rug." Others described prolonged delays that functioned as a form of avoidance. Adi explained:

> I waited two weeks and emailed [the head of the EDI office] again. I still have not heard from her. Then I emailed the president with a copy to her, to say, "waiting," and all of a sudden, I heard from her, but she couldn't fit me in; it's another three weeks.

Participants also emphasized that when responses did occur, they were often superficial and performative rather than substantive. Alicia described:

> I have written three emails to the EDI office, and they never responded. Then I got pissed and I cc'd everybody on that email ... I said, "We have been emailing you month after month, and you are just silent." [...] We repeatedly reached out with the concerns and examples of being discriminated against on campus, and nothing came of it. ... They showed a lack of interest and compassion.

Participants further described a set of management strategies that minimized institutional accountability and aimed to avoid controversy. One such strategy involved framing antisemitism primarily as a historical phenomenon rather than as a contemporary and evolving form of discrimination—unlike institutional approaches to other forms of marginalization, which explicitly trace historical legacies into present-day structures. Lane shared:

> [In the EDI resource] … the part about Jewish people had … just one thousand-year-old tropes. For other… [equity-deserving groups], they list things in context: "This is what people say about Muslims and it's hurtful or not true because of this." […] The section about Jewish people had stuff like, "all Jews are rich," with no context.

When contemporary antisemitism was addressed, it was often centred on right-wing extremism. Aviva described an EDI-led workshop following October 7: "The workshop was fine in terms of addressing the history of neo-Nazi and White supremacist antisemitism, but it completely ignored left antisemitism.… We were like, 'You're not really addressing what's currently going on … on this campus.'"

Another prominent management strategy involved the consistent pairing of antisemitism and Islamophobia. Diane explained, "the two go hand in hand, you cannot talk about antisemitism on its own.… It's like Jews don't have a right to exist on their own with their own pain, their own concerns." Joe added:

> You can never have those things separated. They always have to be together, which I think diminishes both of those experiences.… It worsens things because it puts us in a mirror of each other rather than acknowledging each group for their unique needs and experiences.

Most participants did not dispute the importance of addressing Islamophobia; rather, they interpreted this coupling as a risk-management strategy designed to avoid backlash at the cost of meaningful engagement with both phenomena.

Finally, participants described how Jewish relationships to Zionism were selectively represented within EDI discourses. While many Canadian Jews hold diverse and critical views of Israeli politics, the overwhelming majority understand Zionism as a core dimension of Jewish self-identification.[74] Yet EDI narratives frequently amplified anti-Zionist Jewish voices (e.g., Jewish Faculty Network) while dismissing the perspectives of the majority.[75] Noah explained: "The university … head of the EDI committee … [is] an outspoken anti-Zionist. He has a large social media presence promoting anti-Zionism.… I don't think the EDI committee has anybody who would call themselves a Zionist." Ezra agreed: "There are maybe three anti-Zionist Jewish progressives that I know of. A couple of them have been given a platform and a lot of weight by the administration." Joe added:

> I don't really think [the EDI office] has a good conceptualization of antisemitism … at least from the left, when it is couched in anti-Zionist, anti-Israel rhetoric.… I'm trying to give them the benefit of the doubt that it is ignorance rather than baked in.… If they truly cared, and it wasn't by intent, their policies could be updated.

Overall, these findings show how Jewish concerns were not only dismissed but also actively managed through conditional recognition and selective framing. Antisemitism was acknowledged only in forms that were easier to contain and less disruptive to existing EDI paradigms, at the expense of sustained engagement with Jewish experiences and concerns on campus.

## Discussion

This study examines how Jewish identity and antisemitism are constructed and addressed within EDI frameworks in Canadian higher education. The findings suggest that the marginalization of Jewish identities and experiences within EDI is not simply a matter of institutional oversight—a bug—but is closely tied to how EDI has been conceptualized and operationalized in the Canadian education context—a feature. As a dominant framework, EDI carries significant normative power and institutional authority. Consequently, the limited attention paid to Jewish identity and to antisemitism as a contemporary and structural form of discrimination has tangible consequences for Jewish faculty, staff, and students on Canadian campuses.[76]

While scholarship has already critiqued EDI as serving institutional performance rather than transformation, this study extends that critique by examining the governance of EDI itself.[77] The findings demonstrate that EDI offices, leadership, and policies actively shape and regulate what is deemed important and actionable within institutions. In doing so, they also delineate the boundaries of inclusion and recognition, often excluding experiences that do not align with dominant equity categories. As such, EDI frameworks remain ill-equipped to engage with forms of marginalization that do not map neatly onto categories of race, visibility, and underrepresentation. This is despite high levels of negative attitudes toward Jews among Canadian university students and the documented rise in antisemitic incidents in Canada.[78]

Because Jews are often perceived as well-integrated, socio-economically successful, and as a "model minority" within higher education, they are rarely recognized as belonging within EDI frameworks.[79] Yet Jewish identity occupies a liminal position: constructed as White and privileged, while simultaneously subject to racialization, stereotyping, and conspiracy-based forms of hatred.[80] This positioning complicates dominant EDI categories and contributes to the ongoing erasure of antisemitism as a form of racism.[81]

The conditional ways in which antisemitism is acknowledged within EDI further reveal a wider lack of consensus in Canadian higher education about how antisemitism should be defined and addressed. As Dov Waxman and colleagues argue, "While concern about antisemitism is growing, agreement on what actually constitutes antisemitism is shrinking."[82] Addressing antisemitism within EDI frameworks requires

deeper engagement with Jews as a diverse social identity group and careful attention to their experiences and concerns.[83] This, in turn, requires moving beyond a narrow focus on definitional debates, such as those surrounding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance antisemitism definition (IHRA), and the newly proposed definition of anti-Palestinian racism.[84] These have increasingly devolved into polarized disputes that frame antisemitism and anti-Palestinian racism as mutually exclusive, producing an implicit zero-sum logic, in which one form of suffering is understood to negate another.[85] Moving beyond this impasse requires shifting away from managing antisemitism and Islamophobia through pairing and instead identifying intersections, shared patterns, and meaningful differences between these phenomena.[86] For example, religious accommodation affects both Jewish and Muslim campus members within institutions marked by Christian hegemony. Both groups are also subject to distinct stereotypes that are often intensified by geopolitical tensions.[87]

Relatedly, and perhaps most controversially, the findings point to a lack of willingness within EDI frameworks to engage with Jewish Zionist identities, which is presumably linked to the growing centrality of settler-colonial discourses within EDI.[88] While anti-Zionism is a legitimate political and ideological stance, it remains a minority position within Canadian Jewish communities.[89] As such, it cannot function as an inclusion criterion for EDI spaces.[90] Debates over whether Zionism constitutes a form of settler colonialism are an emerging and contested area of scholarship.[91] Yet these debates often shift from critical analysis to the embodiment of Zionist Jews as morally suspect or illegitimate, rendering individual faculty, staff, and students vulnerable to exclusion or scrutiny based on their real or perceived identities. Justice-oriented frameworks, such as EDI, must grapple seriously with the implications of stigmatizing an entire group.[92]

The current EDI landscape leaves those concerned with Jewish inclusion and antisemitism with limited and problematic options. One option is to claim space through discourses of victimhood, which risks equating Jewish experiences with those of racialized groups in ways that many participants found uncomfortable. Such comparisons can obscure important differences in how marginalization operates and may inadvertently pit minoritized groups against each other rather than foster solidarity. At a time when antisemitism is increasingly weaponized to undermine EDI altogether, this strategy is both ethically and practically fraught.[93]

Another option is to pledge allegiance to EDI by downplaying critique or disavowing aspects of Jewish identity that sit uneasily within existing frameworks. Recent research suggests that a growing number of Canadian Jews may adopt this strategy, particularly in relation to Zionist self-identification.[94] The cost, however, is high: relinquishing authentic self-identification in exchange for conditional recognition. At

the same time, the pain and anger many Canadian Jews have experienced since October 7 can generate a sense of victimhood that, in turn, can diminish the capacity for empathy and the ability to recognize others' pain—including that of Palestinians.[95] Taking Jewish experiences seriously within EDI, therefore, also entails the difficult work of critical self-examination.

There is much at stake for those who view EDI as a vital tool for addressing the enduring effects of historical exclusion and marginalization in Canadian higher education. Jewish academics should be cautious about being used as pawns in efforts to weaken these important advances. At the same time, Jews are justified in expecting respect, recognition, and protection on their own terms.[96] Attending seriously to Jewish inclusion and antisemitism offers an opportunity to critically examine the rigidity of EDI frameworks and to push from within to make them more genuinely inclusive.

## Concluding Thoughts

The marginalization of Jewish identity and antisemitism documented in this study should not be understood as incidental gaps or implementation failures. Rather, these omissions and distortions reflect structural features of how EDI has been conceptualized, categorized, and governed within Canadian higher education. Meaningful change requires a conceptual shift—one that revisits assumptions shaping which identities and forms of harm are centred within EDI frameworks.

One might ask, then, why revise rather than dismantle? A question many Jewish Canadians are asking today. Here it is important to pause and recall the long history of Jewish people advocating and working alongside Black, queer, and Indigenous communities to remove institutional barriers and fight for inclusion.[97] EDI, while not perfect, is the current iteration of these traditions. It can be changed from within, but we must not let anger sever this deep Jewish tradition of *Tikkun olam*—the pursuit of justice for all.

To meaningfully include Jewish identity and antisemitism as part of EDI's core commitments, there is a need for clearer conceptual engagement with antisemitism as a form of racism, attending to both historical legacies and contemporary manifestations.[98] Jewish people are often racialized through markers beyond skin colour, including physical attributes and cultural or religious signifiers. Recognizing this expands understandings of racialization as a dynamic social process, opening new opportunities to engage with diverse forms of marginalization and their intersections.[99] It also demands moving beyond the assumption that Jews are simply White or uniformly privileged.[100] Jewish communities are not homogeneous; they include people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, skin colours, sexual orientations, and so-

cio-economic positions.[101] Engaging with this internal diversity is important not only for Jews but also for strengthening EDI framing by moving away from rigid binaries of power, privilege, and marginalization.[102]

Ultimately, EDI seeks to foster an institutional culture that actively encourages and facilitates full participation. This requires opening spaces for engagement and interaction across difference and a willingness to engage in complex social issues and, at times, uncomfortable conversations. Research shows that interpersonal interactions are among the most effective ways to reduce prejudice, and universities are uniquely positioned to facilitate such encounters.[103] If EDI frameworks were to recognize pain and vulnerability without qualification, hierarchy, or competition, their ability to lead to meaningful institutional change would grow. This is work worth doing.

**Lilach Marom** is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Her research draws on critical theories to highlight issues of equity, anti-racism, and inclusion in education. She has worked as an educator with diverse students and communities in multiple contexts. She has written about the experiences of racialized, Indigenous, and international students in higher and teacher education. Her current project examines EDI policies, discourses, and action plans in higher education, asking what is included and what is left unaddressed in pursuit of a more robust understanding and implementation of EDI.

## Appendix

**Appendix A**
**Survey Questions Used in Analysis**

**Section 1. Position and University Affiliation**

1.0 The following questions will ask about your academic position and affiliation.
For the purpose of this survey, please consider your primary place of employment in an institution of higher education in Canada.

1.2 What is the name of the academic institution where you work? We are asking this question to be able to examine diverse institutional policies with relation to the data.

a) Name of the academic institution (please specify): [text box]
b) Prefer not to say

1.4 What is your primary form of employment at your academic institution?

a) Faculty
b) Staff
c) Other

1.6 What is your primary academic discipline?|

a) Behavioural science (psychology, neuroscience, cognitive neuroscience, behavioural economics)
b) Biological sciences/Life sciences
c) Business
d) Chemistry
e) Computer sciences
f) Education
g) Engineering
h) Humanities (literature, arts, languages, theater, music, etc.)
i) Law/Criminal justice
j) Mathematics
k) Medicine/Health sciences and practice/Nursing/Pharmacy
l) Physical sciences
m) Public administration
n) Social sciences (economics, sociology, history, archaeology, anthropology, political science)
o) Other (please specify): [text box]

**Section 2. University Policies**

2.0 The following questions are referring to your academic institution's policies.

2.1 Based on your knowledge, does your academic institution have policies that address:

a) Antisemitism
    i. Yes
    ii. No
    iii. Not sure
a) Other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
    i. Yes
    ii. No
    iii. Not sure
b) Workplace misconduct (e.g., bullying and harassment, sexual misconduct)
    i. Yes
    ii. No
    iii. Not sure

2.2 In your opinion, are the following policies comprehensive (i.e., are they relevant, effective, having a positive effect, and capturing the right things)?

a) Antisemitism
    i. Strongly disagree
    ii. Somewhat disagree
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat agree
    v. Strongly agree
b) Other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
    i. Strongly disagree
    ii. Somewhat disagree
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat agree
    v. Strongly agree
c) Workplace misconduct (e.g., bullying and harassment, sexual misconduct)
    i. Strongly disagree
    ii. Somewhat disagree
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat agree
    v. Strongly agree

**Section 3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office**

3.0 The following questions are referring to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office (or its equivalent) at your academic institution.

3.1 To what degree are you aware of your academic institution's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office (or its equivalent) and its activities regarding:

a) Training, resources, and/or education on antisemitism
    i. Very unaware
    ii. Somewhat unaware
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat aware
    v. Very aware
    vi. Not applicable/do not exist
b) Training, resources, and/or education on Jewish identity
    i. Very unaware
    ii. Somewhat unaware
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat aware
    v. Very aware
    vi. Not applicable/do not exist
c) Training, resources, and/or education on other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
    i. Very unaware
    ii. Somewhat unaware
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat aware
    v. Very aware
    vi. Not applicable/do not exist
d) Training, resources, and/or education on other identities (e.g., Black, Indigenous)
    i. Very unaware
    ii. Somewhat unaware
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat aware
    v. Very aware
    vi. Not applicable/do not exist

3.2 In your opinion, is your academic institution's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office (or its equivalent) and its activities comprehensive (i.e., are they relevant, effective, having a positive effect, and capturing the right things)?

a) Training, resources, and/or education on antisemitism
    i. Strongly disagree
    ii. Somewhat disagree
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat agree
    v. Strongly agree
b) Training, resources, and/or education on Jewish identity
    i. Strongly disagree
    ii. Somewhat disagree
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat agree
    v. Strongly agree
c) Training, resources, and/or education on other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
    i. Strongly disagree
    ii. Somewhat disagree

iii. Neutral
iv. Somewhat agree
v. Strongly agree

d) Training, resources, and/or education on other identities (e.g., Black, Indigenous)
i. Strongly disagree
ii. Somewhat disagree
iii. Neutral
iv. Somewhat agree
v. Strongly agree

**Section 4. Jewish Identity and Experiences on Campus**

4.0 The following questions will ask about your relationship to Jewishness and/or Judaism as well as your experiences on campus.

4.1 Although the categories listed below may not represent your full identity or use the language you prefer, for the purpose of this survey, please indicate which group(s) below best describes your identity? (Select all that apply):

a) Not Jewish
b) Jewish by religion
c) Jewish by culture
d) Jewish by ethnicity
a. Ashkenazi
b. Mizrahi
c. Sephardic
d. Other (please specify): [text box]
e) Jewish and other race or ethnicity
a. Asian
b. Black
c. Latinx/Hispanic
d. Indigenous/Aboriginal, Native in Canada/US/Australia/New Zealand, etc.
e. Middle Eastern, North African
f. Other (please specify): [text box]

4.3 If Jewish, to what degree do you feel an emotional attachment to Israel?
a) Very unattached
b) Somewhat unattached
c) Neutral
d) Somewhat attached
e) Very attached

4.14 Thinking specifically of your Jewish identity or allyship to the Jewish community, please indicate whether any of the following things has happened to you at your academic institution (either in person or online) *before* October 7th, 2023:

a) Joined a new Jewish club, activity, or network
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure
b) Seen anti-Jewish graffiti, vandalism, or signs on campus
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure
c) Heard someone use a stereotype or trope about Jews (e.g., Jewish power or wealth)
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

d) Heard someone say Jews are silencing the voices of others
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
e) Heard comments that expressed distrust towards Jewish organizations/communities
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
f) Felt that your lived experiences were invalidated/discredited
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
g) Felt targeted/unwelcome because of the encampment/protest on your campus
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
h) Felt distressed while on campus
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
i) Avoided certain parts of campus or changed your behaviour
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
j) Been excluded from a campus event
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
k) Been harassed online in an academic channel
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
l) Been verbally targeted on campus
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
m) Been physically threatened or attacked on campus
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure

4.15 Thinking specifically of your Jewish identity or allyship to the Jewish community, please indicate whether any of the following things has happened to you at your academic institution (either in person or online) *since* October 7th, 2023:

a) Joined a new Jewish club, activity, or network
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
b) Seen anti-Jewish graffiti, vandalism, or signs on campus
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
c) Heard someone use a stereotype or trope about Jews (e.g., Jewish power or wealth)
    i. Yes, has happened
    ii. No, has not happened
    iii. Not sure
d) Heard someone say Jews are silencing the voices of others

i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

e) Heard comments that expressed distrust towards Jewish organizations/communities
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

f) Felt that your lived experiences were invalidated/discredited
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

g) Felt targeted/unwelcome because of the encampment/protest on your campus
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

h) Felt distressed while on campus
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

i) Avoided certain parts of campus or changed your behaviour
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

j) Been excluded from a campus event
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

k) Been harassed online in an academic channel
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

l) Been verbally targeted on campus
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

m) Been physically threatened or attacked on campus
i. Yes, has happened
ii. No, has not happened
iii. Not sure

**Section 5. Reporting and Institutional Support**

5.0 The following questions will ask you about your experiences with incident reporting.

5.1 Since October 7th, 2023, have you reported an incident or filed a complaint about antisemitism at the academic institution that you are currently working at? (Note: if you have filed multiple reports or complaints, please choose the one that affected you most).

a) Yes
b) No

5.4 To whom did you report the incident or complaint? (Select all that apply):

a) EDI Office
b) Dean
c) Chair
d) Colleague
e) Union
f) Human Rights Office

g) External person/organization (e.g., CIJA, Hillel, NECA, police, political representative)
h) University antisemitism task force
i) Other (please specify): [text box]

5.5 How supported did you feel (by the above choice) regarding the report/complaint? [participants only presented with option selected in question 5.4]

a) EDI Office
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
b) Dean
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
c) Chair
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
d) Colleague
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
e) Union
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
f) Human Rights Office
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
g) External person/organization (e.g., CIJA, Hillel, NECA, police, political representative)
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
h) University antisemitism task force
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported
    iii. Neutral
    iv. Somewhat supported
    v. Very supported
i) Other [item presented to participant pulled from text box in question 5.4]
    i. Very unsupported
    ii. Somewhat unsupported

iii. Neutral
iv. Somewhat supported
v. Very supported

5.6 The incident/complaint was handled to my satisfaction (by the above choice): [participants only presented with option selected in question 5.4]

a) EDI Office
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
b) Dean
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
c) Chair
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
d) Colleague
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
e) Union
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
f) Human Rights Office
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
g) External person/organization (e.g., CIJA, Hillel, NECA, police, political representative)
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
h) University antisemitism task force
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree
   iii. Neither agree nor disagree
   iv. Somewhat agree
   v. Strongly agree
i) Other [item presented to participant pulled from text box in question 5.4]
   i. Strongly disagree
   ii. Somewhat disagree

iii. Neither agree nor disagree
iv. Somewhat agree
v. Strongly agree

**Appendix B**
**Survey Analysis Process**

Categorical variables were summarized using counts and proportions, and continuous or ordinal measures using means, standard deviations, medians, and interquartile ranges, with denominators reported for each measure to reflect item-level response patterns. Core analytic constructs included domain-specific policy awareness, perceived policy comprehensiveness, and EDI office activity awareness and adequacy. Policy awareness items were coded as binary indicators reflecting whether respondents reported awareness of institutional policies addressing antisemitism, other forms of discrimination, and workplace misconduct. EDI office activity and all comprehensiveness items were captured using five-point Likert-type scales, coded such that higher values indicate greater perceived comprehensiveness or visibility. Composite EDI indices were constructed separately for Jewish/antisemitism-related recognition and for other identity-based discrimination and analyzed descriptively to characterize overall distributions and missingness patterns.

To assess relative recognition across domains while minimizing confounding by stable individual characteristics, analyses emphasized within-respondent comparisons. For binary policy awareness measures, paired McNemar tests compared awareness of antisemitism-related policies with awareness of other discrimination and misconduct policies. For scaled comprehensiveness measures, paired Wilcoxon signed-rank tests compared Jewish/antisemitism-related ratings with ratings for other discrimination domains.

Within-person gap variables were constructed by subtracting other-domain scores from Jewish-domain scores, yielding continuous measures of relative EDI awareness and comprehensiveness, with negative values indicating lower perceived recognition of Jewish/antisemitism-related issues. These gap measures were summarized descriptively and served as primary outcomes in subsequent inferential analyses examining whether recognition gaps varied across institutional and positional contexts, including role, institution type, disciplinary background, and Israel attachment. Linear models with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors were used for gap outcomes. Because difference scores may be sensitive to measurement error in either component measure, these models are interpreted cautiously as indicators of relative recognition patterns rather than as precise estimates of underlying institutional differences.

## Appendix C
## Logistic Regression Model Predicting Formal Reporting Since October 7

**Table A1**
**Logistic regression model predicting formal reporting of an antisemitic incident since October 7**

| Predictor | Odds ratio | 95% CI | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Post-October 7 antisemitic experiences | 1.37 | 1.11–1.78 | 0.008 |
| Pre-October 7 antisemitic experiences | 0.93 | 0.78–1.09 | 0.369 |
| EDI awareness gap | 1.31 | 0.84–2.09 | 0.233 |
| EDI comprehensiveness gap | 0.77 | 0.49–1.19 | 0.252 |
| Other role vs. faculty | 0.64 | 0.02–13.99 | 0.788 |
| Staff vs. faculty | 0.80 | 0.14–4.54 | 0.801 |
| Other research-intensive institution vs. U15 institution | 1.97 | 0.39–11.31 | 0.420 |
| Teaching-focused institution vs. U15 institution | 2.16 | 0.29–21.12 | 0.472 |
| Business/Law vs. Humanities/Social Sciences | 0.30 | 0.04–2.26 | 0.241 |
| Health/Medicine vs. Humanities/Social Sciences | 1.35 | 0.32–5.71 | 0.680 |
| Other/Unclassified discipline vs. Humanities/Social Sciences | 8.54 | 0.68–267.79 | 0.139 |
| STEM vs. Humanities/Social Sciences | 2.35 | 0.25–42.96 | 0.487 |
| Attached to Israel vs. unattached/neutral | 0.66 | 0.08–5.28 | 0.689 |

**Note:** Odds ratios are from a multivariable logistic regression model predicting formal reporting of an antisemitic incident since October 7 in the strict analytic sample. The model adjusted for post-October 7 antisemitic experiences, pre-October 7 antisemitic experiences, EDI awareness gap, EDI comprehensiveness gap, role, institution type, discipline, and Israel attachment. Reference categories are faculty, U15 institution, Humanities/Social Sciences, and unattached/neutral Israel attachment. The missing discipline category was not estimable in the model and is omitted from the table. CI = confidence interval.

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