BLANTYRE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

BIU GENDER POLICY

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

Blantyre International University (BIU) is committed to promoting a diverse, scholarly community in which people are valued, respected, and treated equitably. Its quest to achieve excellence in teaching and research requires an academic environment in which staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds can flourish irrespective of class, race or gender.

BIU opposes discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic or national origins, employment status, disability, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religious or ethical belief. This policy requires that all selection, appointment, promotion and evaluation processes should be based on impartial assessment of merit and the definition of merit is inclusive of diverse skills and contributions. Where necessary, procedures will be reviewed, training provided and assistance given in achieving the successful delivery of equal opportunities.

2. RATIONALE

There is a growing awareness in Blantyre International University of the need to improve gender equity and equality.

This policy reflects BIU commitment and responsibility to gender equity and equality as stated in BIU Corporate Strategic Plan. It reflects the Constitution of Malawi and supports the Convention of the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1991) and reflects the Sustainable Development Goals. It also reflects the African Union Gender Policy Commitments adopted in 2009 by all forum members as part of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa [SDGEA] i.e., African Women's Decade 2010-2020 and as their specific undertaking in respect to the Global Platform for Action endorsed in Beijing (1995) and the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 2 (1941).

3. POLICY VISION

This gender policy will guide BIU in its actions to eliminate barriers and gender inequality within the University community.

The policy seeks to create a framework that will assist the University to encourage gender equality in all staff and student activities and ensure equitable participation and appropriate representation of both genders in all its decision making processes. Specifically, the policy commits the University to applying the principle of gender equality in staffing; training and development; in student enrolment; and provide equal opportunities in teaching, learning and research.

4. APPLICATION

This policy applies to the whole University covering all Sections and Departments

5. POLICY PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

This policy is based on the following values:
a)   The University is sensitive to gender issues and committed to addressing gender imbalances in enrolment of students and staff employment;
b)   Women and men are to be valued equally in all dimensions of the University's work and provide   equitable opportunities for development;

c) the curriculum includes learning experiences and areas of knowledge which will assist all students to gain an understanding of what it means to be female or male, of the inequitable relationships between women and men in most societies, and of the meaning of the universal right to equality;

d) The University is committed to building an all-inclusive academic community which provides the opportunity for all persons to develop their full potential irrespective of disability, socio-cultural background and sex;

e) affirmative action strategies to improve the quality of education for women are based on a recognition that action is required at all levels of the education system to advance women's development and achieve gender equality and equity.

Principle One
BIU is committed to the achievement of gender balance with respect to both academic and administrative staffing and decision-making processes.

Policy Objective
To increase the percentage of female senior members.

Strategies
a) The University shall give preference to women applicants in the recruitment process in situations where both sexes perform equally. However, departments where the ratio is already weighed in favour of women, men will be favourably considered.

b) Department shall search for qualified women to fill vacant academic and administrative positions.

c) The University shall ensure that there is a fair representation of both women and men on all committees and boards.

d) The University shall ensure that its policies on staff development are fair and non-discriminatory on the basis of sex.

e) The university shall ensure the review of its policy documents from a gender perspective.

f) Women shall be encouraged to take on higher level responsibilities.

f) The University will provide a mentoring scheme for women in areas where there is an identified need.

Principle Two
BIU is committed to achieving gender balance in enrolment of students.

Policy Objective
To increase the enrolment of female students.

Strategies
a) The University will adopt appropriate concessionary measures in designated disciplines where numbers in a particular gender are unacceptably low.

b) The University shall ensure gender equity in the award of scholarships.

Principle Three
BIU will maintain gender-disaggregated statistics on both staff and students for decision-making purposes.

Policy Objective
To provide gender-disaggregated statistics for reporting, monitoring and decision-making purposes.

Strategies

a) The University will maintain a gender-disaggregated statistics of all staff, disaggregated further by Departments; and will update these statistics annually and publish them.

b)   The University will maintain a gender-disaggregated statistics of all students, and will update these statistics annually and publish them.

c)   The University will maintain a database of all members of the academic and administrative staff, specifying their qualifications, experiences, areas of expertise and interest and services to and outside the University.

Principle Four

BIU shall address gender issues in the content of courses and course materials.

Policy Objective

To ensure the engendering of the curriculum by making sure content of courses and materials for teaching and learning are gender responsive.

Strategies

a)   Encourage the review and restructuring of courses to ensure coverage of gender issues.

b)   Promote an environment which is supportive of women in all aspects including teaching and learning processes, classroom management, organisation, the social and cultural and physical environment, values and attitudes.

c)   The University will ensure that its annual budget follows the tenets of gender budgeting.

d)   Plan for the implementation of gender studies within the University in the next five years.

Principle Five

BIU supports the development of policy documents from a gender perspective and the use of gender sensitive language at all levels of activity.

Policy Objectives

To promote the use of gender sensitivity in:

       a) All University documents;

       b) All published matter ascribed to BIU

       c) All information conveyed to students, staff and applicants for positions in the University.

Strategies

The following practices should be observed:

a)   The use of 'man' or 'men' as generic terms to describe both genders should be avoided as much as possible. The use of these terms should be restricted to males.

    Gender neutral/sensitive terms exist and should be used, for example, 'person', 'people', 'staff', 'personnel';

b)   Plural subjects should be used in case of unspecified gender to avoid awkward use of pronouns. For example, the phrase "Each student should check his or her results" should be expressed "Students should check their results";

c)   Where it is not relevant, a person's gender should not be mentioned. For example the phrase "The woman referee…." should be expressed "The referee …."

d)   Educate the University community on the use of gender sensitive language.

e)   Encourage the review of BIU policy documents from a gender perspective.

Principle Six
BIU is committed to ensuring that gender issues are considered and included in University grant proposals and projects.

Policy Objective
To ensure that proposals for funding are gender visible.

Strategies
a) Project proposals in all fields shall consider the needs of all sexes, with greater emphasis on women's training and capacity-building.
b) Monitoring and evaluation of projects should identify the impact on women.

6. TIMEFRAME AND MONITORING

This policy has identified six principles with implementation strategies. The strategies serve as guidelines. Departments and Sections, may use other strategies where appropriate to achieve the objectives in line with gender equality and gender equity principles.

To ensure that the policy is implemented and makes a meaningful impact:
a. An interdisciplinary gender balanced committee shall be established to ensure that the policy is implemented.
b. Indicators for measuring the progress of policy objectives will be developed by the Committee.
c. Achievements will be monitored and reported annually.
d. A sensitization programme will be organized on the gender policy for the University community. The policy will be made available to all.

7. PRIORITY AREAS

The Gender Policy identifies five key priority areas:
Gender and Students
Gender and Staff
Sexual Harassment and GBV
Inclusive Education
Pandemics and Epidemics: HIV/AIDS and COVID-19

7.1 Priority Area 1: Gender and students
Objectives:
- The key objectives on gender and students are:
- to ensure that gender is a key consideration in enrollment ofstudents;
- to ensure that curriculum is gender sensitive andresponsive;
- to improve student's academic performance and retention with a focus on female students especially those in sciences andtechnology;
- to ensure safe and convenient accommodation and other facilities for students especially female students and
- to enhance equal participation in decision making by students with a special focus on participation of femalestudents.

7.1.1 Enrollment

7.1.1.1. Problem: Unequal representation of male and female students in enrolment into higher educationinstitutions.

7.1.1.2. Policy Statement: The selection board shall ensure that the enrolment process into HEI, programmesormodulesresultinagenderbalanceofstudents,andthatspecialconsiderationis given to female students (or male students where applicable), especially those from rural and poor background and those withdisabilities.

7.1.1.2. Strategies:

The enrolment/ selection body shall:

- take gender equality as a consideration inselection;
  ensure that there is equitable access to information about the enrollment process for both males andfemales;
- ensure a gender-conscious enrollment process that encourages female or male students to enroll into programmes that the specific group of students is under represented;
- develop and implement outreach programs tos upport females and PWD careers choices into non-traditional fields through outreach motivational programmes, confidence building and role modeling;
- publicize values that promote inclusive enrollment;
- use affirmative action to ensure improved gender-balance based on the minimum standard of 40 – 60 representation provided under the Gender Equality Act and monitor enrolment statistics in all programmes and modules to ensure that the gender balance is sustained orimproved.

7.1.2 Enrollment

7.1.2.1 Problem: Unequal representation of male and female students in enrolment into higher education institutions.

7.1.2.2 Policy Statement: The selection board shall ensure that the enrolment process into HEI, programmes or modules result in a gender balance of students, and that special consideration is given to female students (or male students where applicable), especially those from rural and poor background and those with disabilities.

7.1.2.3 Strategies:

The enrolment/ selection body shall:

(i)   take gender equality as a consideration in selection;
(ii)   ensure that there is equitable access to information about the enrollment process for both males and females;
(iii)   ensure a gender-conscious enrollment process that encourages female or male students to enroll into programmes that the specific group of students is underrepresented;
(iv)   develop and implement outreach programs to support females and PWD careers choices into non-traditional fields through outreach motivational programmes, confidence building and role modeling;
(v)   publicize values that promote inclusive enrollment;
(vi)   use affirmative action to ensure improved gender-balance based on the minimum standard of 40 – 60 representation provided under the Gender Equality Act and
(vii)   monitor enrolment statistics in all programmes and modules to ensure that the gender balance is sustained or improved.

7.1.3 Curriculum

7.1.3.1 Problems:
- Few standalone gender programmes and courses, or gender sensitive courses and
- Lack of gender transformative teaching, learning and assessment methods.

7.1.3.2 Policy statement: Curricula, teaching methods, and systems of monitoring and evaluation of course content and delivery shall be gender sensitive and transformative.

7.1.3.3 Strategies:

(i) Every Dean / Head shall ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all courses, programmes and/or provided as a core course in all programs at first year or as appropriate.

(ii) Every Dean / Head shall ensure that students are exposed to concepts and theories that enable them to understand and appreciate gender and its implications for society at first year.

(iii) Every Dean/ Head shall ensure that all curricula are reviewed to integrate gender and respond to changes in gender related issues relevant within each course.

(iv) Every College Quality Assurance Director shall ensure that gender inclusivity is a key consideration in quality assurance management and administration of all programs.

(v) Every Vice Chancellor /Principal shall ensure that gender responsiveness is used as one of the criteria for assessing quality of courses in all programs.

(vi) Every Dean / Head shall ensure that all lecturers receive gender orientation and training

(vii) Every principal shall ensure support, with appropriate resources, for further training and education of its academic staff in Gender Mainstreaming.

(viii) Every Dean / Head shall ensure gender sensitive teaching, materials and learning methods.

(ix) Every Dean/ Head shall ensure that lecturers use gender-sensitive language that is inclusive of both females and males.

(x) Every principal shall ensure support of publication of books, textbooks and other teaching materials, from a gender-balanced perspective.

(xi) Every Dean /Head shall promote gender transformative approaches in pedagogy that challenge negative gender culture, attitudes and practices.

7.1.4 Performance and Retention

7.1.4.1 Problem: Poor performance of students, especially female students, due to unique female needs, leading to low retention of female students

7.1.4.2 Policy Statement: There shall be special effort to improve the academic performance and retention of female students.

7.1.4.3 Strategies:

(i) Every Dean/ Head shall ensure that students who are underperforming, especially females, are given full academic support from both academic and support staff such as offer of tutorials and bridging courses.

(ii) The Vice Chancellor / Principal shall ensure that programmes embark on activities designed to raise the profiles of female scholars and professionals.

(iii) The Vice Chancellor / Principal shall ensure that female students interact with positive female role models in university-sponsored activities.

(iv) All responsible authorities for granting students loans shall give priority to needy female students.

(v) The Vice Chancellor / Principal shall ensure that all college facilities are female

friendly, by for example, providing adequate clean sanitation facilities with equipment that supports female menstruation needs and reusable sanitary pads.

(vi) The Vice Chancellor / Principal shall ensure that sexual and reproductive health services are available and accessible to all students, especially females at all times and facilitate back to school policy for students that withdrawal from college due to pregnancy.

(vii) The Vice Chancellor/ Principal shall ensure that there is availability and accessibility of counselling services at all times and that all students, especially females, are aware of the existence of such services.

7.1.5 Equal Participation in decision making

7.1.5.1 Problem: Low female representation and participation in decision making structures, curricular and extracurricular activities

7.1.5.2 Policy Statement: Institutions shall promote female students' participation indecision making structures, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

7.1.5.3 Strategies:

(i) The responsible authorities shall ensure that females are encouraged, prioritized and supported in accessing and voicing out their views in all decision-making platforms in college.

(ii) Every dean of students shall ensure that females are encouraged and supported to contest in influential positions in the Students' Union and other bodies.

(iii) Every dean of students shall ensure that the Students Union's elections are peaceful, fair and gender sensitive and responsive.

(iv) The Vice Chancellor / Principal shall ensure that negative stereotyping of women who contest or hold influential positions is not tolerated by raising awareness and punishing offenders.

(v) The Vice Chancellor / Principal shall ensure that female students' welfare associations and men for gender clubs are encouraged and supported.

(vi) The Vice Chancellor / Principal shall encourage and support female students to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities at the college.

(vii) The Vice Chancellor /Principal shall ensure gender mainstreaming of all college curricular and extracurricular activities.

7.2 Key Priority Area 2: Gender an staff

Objectives:
- To ensure equal representation of male and female staff in employment recruitment;
- to eradicate discriminatory conditions of service;
- to strengthen reporting and disciplinary systems.

7.2.1 Equal Access and Recruitment

7.2.1.1 Problems: Minimal representation of females at all levels especially at leadership levels, and gender-blind recruitment processes.

7.2.1.2 Policy Statement: There shall be equal representation of men and women at all levels.

7.2.1.3 Strategies:

(i) The university shall develop guidelines on implementing 40-60 employment representation requirements of the Gender Equality Act and other affirmative action measures.

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(ii)   All Deans shall ensure that no programme or module has students or staff of only one sex.

(iii)   Gender shall be a primary consideration in recruitment and all recruitment panels shall have female representation.

7.2.2 Equality in Conditions of Service

7.2.2.1 Problem: Gender blind conditions of service including promotion criteria, inad equate maternity leave, lack of paternity leave, lack of essential childcare facilities & nurseries, poor sanitation facilities.

7.2.2.2 Policy Statement: Conditions of service shall be gender sensitive, and institutions shall provide for adequate maternity leave, paternity leave, essential childcare facilities and sanitation facilities.

7.2.2.3 Strategies:

The University shall:

(i)   apply conditions of service and promotion criteria in a gender sensitive and responsive manner and where appropriate provide and undertake affirmative action to ensure equitable access to promotions, trainings, scholarships, research grants and other opportunities especially for female staff;

(ii)   prioritize females in further education opportunities and research grants;

(iii)   ensure equal pay for work of equal value;

(iv)   provide pre and postnatal maternity leave of not less than two months as provided by law;

(v)   make provision for paternity leave of not less than two weeks;

(vi)   provide childcare facilities;

(vii)   provide clean, private, accessible sanitation facilities with suitable bins for used sanitary wear; and

(viii) adapt working conditions and adjust working organization to suit the needs of women with family responsibilities.

7.2.3 Equal Participation in College Decision Making Structures

7.2.3.1 Problem: Unequal representation of males and females in decision making processes.

7.2.3.2 Policy Statement: Promote equal representation and participation in decision making bodies especially for female member of staff.

7.2.3.3 Strategies:

The principal shall:

(ii)   provide leadership training to staff especially females, in leadership positions to ensure that they effectively speak out and influence decisions when they sit on decision making bodies; and

(iii)   ensure gender mainstreaming of all decisions made by any decision-making body of the college.

7.2.4 Prevention and Response to Gender Discrimination in Employment

7.2.4.1 Problem: Prevalence of patriarchal attitudes, segregated roles, and gender discrimination.

7.2.4.2 Policy Statement: Institutions shall eradicate patriarchal attitudes, segregated roles, and gender discrimination in general.

7.2.4.3 Strategies:
The University shall:
(i)   intensify awareness on gender, negative and positive discrimination, and gender equality;
(ii)   ensure implementation of gender policies and gender sensitive criteria and guidelines
(iii)   have systems/guidelines to ensure no negative repercussions for those that report gender discrimination;
(iv)   have grievance & disciplinary systems and structures that are effective, expeditious, sensitive and confidential;
(v)   grievance and reporting structures shall have equal representation of males and females;
(vi)   ensure that appropriate disciplinary action is taken for reported cases of discrimination;
(vii)   provide training to staff on gender and gender discrimination at work;
(viii) Institutions should deliberately engage either sex in non-traditional sectors; and
(ix)   institutions should avoid occupationally segregated provision of training.

7.2.5 Equality in Association and Collective Bargaining

7.2.5.1 Problem: Underrepresentation of women in trade unions especially in leadership roles.

7.2.5.2 Policy Statement: Institutions shall promote equal representation and participation in trade unions.

7.2.5.3 Strategies: All institutions shall:
(i)   ensure that all trade unions in HEI are complying with the 20% minimum quota for women provided for in the Labour Relations Act or the higher standard of the 40- 60 quotas as provided under the GEA;
(ii)   support training and awareness on equality in association and collective bargaining;
(iii)   promote the representation of females as members and leaders; and
(iv)   support trade union activities including check –off systems.

7.3   Priority Area 3: SExual Harrassment and Gender Based Violence (GBV)
Objectives:
*   To prevent and adopt a zero-tolerance approach against sexual harassment and GBV.
*   To establish effective reporting and complaints mechanisms.
*   To swiftly respond to reports of sexual harassment and GBV.
*   To protect victims and survivors of sexual harassment and GBV.
*   To provide support systems such as rehabilitation and counselling for victims and perpetrators.

7.3.1 Prevention and Awareness of Zero Tolerance against Sexual Harassment and GBV

7.3.1.1 Problem: Lack of awareness of the different forms, nature and harm caused by sexual harassment and other forms of GBV.

7.3.1.2 Policy Statement: The institution shall raise awareness amongst staff and students on prevention of and zero tolerance against sexual harassment and GBV, including the definition of sexual harassment in the Gender Equality Act.

7.3.1.3. Strategies:
a. Students

(i)   There shall be ongoing sensitization of students on sexual harassment, and corresponding

regulations and policies with a focus on those that suffer multiple discrimination including people with disabilities, the poor, transgender and LGBQTIs.

(ii) New students shall receive information on sexual harassment together with other information given during orientation.

(iii) New students shall fill in questionnaires to enable the institution to analyze their attitudes and beliefs regarding gender issues and GBV to enable the institution tailor training and orientation to raise awareness amongst new students.

(iv) The institution shall establish gender transformative, student-led initiatives such as legal clinics, clubs, societies and extra-curricular programs that engage in research, awareness and gender equality advocacy.

(v) The institution shall form partnerships with programs that address shared risk factors for violence e.g. drug and alcohol abuse prevention, pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted infection prevention etc.

(vi) There shall be adequate security in places of accommodation and at all social events.

(vii) Security staff shall undergo training on response to sexual harassment.

(viii) A full-time staff person shall be designated to focus on prevention of Sexual harassment. and GBV and shall work with a multi-disciplinary team that will respond to violence when it occurs, as well as work on shifting the culture of the campus to prevent violence.

(ix) Social events shall be used as opportunities to spread awareness about sexual harassment e.g. merchandise such as cups and t shirts with messaging on sexual harassment that could be distributed at social weekends.

(x) Material shall be developed on sexual harassment to be distributed to students, and shared on the institution's website, social media platforms, and in all places of accommodation. All the material shall be accessible to students with disabilities.

(xi) Prohibition of and zero tolerance against sexual harassment and GBV shall be a clearly stated in all rules, regulations and codes of conduct of student societies.

b. Staff

(i) Questions on GBV and sexual harassment shall be incorporated into the recruitment process including application and interviews.

(ii) Newly recruited staff shall undergo vetting to check their history regarding sexual harassment and GBV, and also their attitudes and beliefs and this shall include a written self-declaration on record of non-involvement in any case of sexual harassment.

(iii) Newly recruited staff shall undergo training in sexual harassment and GBV.

(iv) All staff shall undergo annual training in gender issues, especially sexual harassment and GBV.

(v) Staff shall be empowered to report GBV.

(vi) The institution shall provide all staff with accessible materials with information on sexual harassment and GBV, as well as reporting and complaint procedures.

(vii) The institution shall develop guidelines and codes of conduct for staff relations and also staff –students' relations, clearly describing power dynamics in consensual relationships, and prohibiting sexual harassment and GBV.

(viii) Staff with disabilities shall have full access to GBV information.

c. Online Harassment

(i) The institution shall raise awareness on and prevent cyber –harassment.

(ii) The institution shall raise awareness of the meaning of cyber-harassment including the provisions of the Electronic Transactions and Cyber Security Act, 2016.
(iii) Awareness shall comprise of simplified messaging in common languages.
(iv) All gender curricula shall include cyber-harassment.
(v) Staff, as well as the team designated to handle sexual harassment, shall be trained in cyber harassment to enable them to deal with such cases.
(vi) Institution shall have regulatory framework for cyber-harassment.
(vii) ICT personnel shall be oriented and consulted in decisions to do with cyber-harassment.

d. Male Victims of Sexual Harassment and GBV

(i) The institution shall raise awareness on males being victims of sexual harassment and GBV.
(ii) The institution shall encourage holistic understanding of GBV, including power dynamics and deconstruction of gender stereotypes.
(iii) The institution shall dispel myths about men not being victims of GBV through gender initiatives and programming.
(iv) All gender training shall emphasize that both men and women can be victims of GBV.
(v) Male students shall be given safe spaces to talk about sexual harassment and GBV, and the institution shall support this by establishing societies, clubs and other initiatives.
(vi) The institution shall raise awareness on positive masculinities.
(vii) Male students in minority groups such as those with disabilities shall be supported and encouraged to speak out against sexual harassment and GBV.

e. Students Harassing Fellow Students and Non-Students Off-Campus

(1) The institution shall raise awareness on sexual harassment amongst students living off campus.
(ii) The unique circumstances of students living off-campus shall be considered in all sexual harassment and GBV-related decisions, initiatives and guidelines.
(iv) Landlords shall be furnished with relevant contact details of the institution to use in cases of sexual harassment and GBV amongst and by their student-tenants.

f. Community Members: Off-Campus

(i) The institution shall safeguard students who live off-campus from sexual harassment and create a safe environment.
(ii) The institution shall foster relationships with local support services, counselors, community rape crisis centers, and advocates- particularly those in areas where students live.
(iii) Within the team designated to deal with sexual harassment, there shall be one office specifically dedicated to students living off campus who shall ensure that sexual harassment is being prevented, and that when it occurs, there is an effective complaints system in place to hold perpetrators accountable.
(iv) The institution may act as a link between landlords and students by having a database of pre-approved accommodation which they have already reviewed in terms of safety.
(v) The institution shall have annual review of off-campus accommodation by way of survey. Data will be collected from students, landlords, and community members.

g. Lecturers Demanding Sexual Favours from Students in Exchange for Grades

(i) The institution shall prevent sexual harassment by staff and ensure an effective reporting system in response to complaints.

(ii) Institution shall have guidelines for student-staff relations. These guidelines will detail what conduct is and is not allowed, and will explicitly prohibit sexual harassment related to teaching, learning, supervision and assessment.

(iii) Each staff member, especially those just joining the institution, must make a declaration that they have never committed a sexual offence including sexual harassment. This will act as a way of checking one's history, and also showing the institution's commitment to safeguarding staff and students from sexual harassment.

(iv) Every staff member will have a responsibility to prevent sexual harassment and to report it when brought to their attention including through anonymous reporting.

(v) Recognizing that students may not always be comfortable reporting a matter directly to the institution's authorities, lecturers to whom a report has been made about a fellow lecturer shall report the matter.

(vi) A Complaints Form shall be available to everyone, both in hard copy and soft copy. It shall be anonymously accessible i.e. one may download it from their student portal or may collect it from a place on campus where their identity is not compromised. This form shall require details about the staff-member alleged to have sexually harassed a student.

7.4.2 Reporting and Responding to Cases of Sexual harassment and GBV

7.4.2.1 Problem: Lack of reporting of sexual harassment cases.

7.4.2.2 Policy Statement: There shall be an effective and accessible informal and formal complaints system.

7.4.2.3 Strategies:

(i) The institution shall ensure that programming for prevention and response is survivor-centered and trauma-informed and that at all times, the complainant's right to dignity and privacy shall be respected.

(ii) In the event of rape, sexual assault and any other criminal sexual offence, the victim should immediately report the incident to the nearest police station and thereafter attend the nearest health facility.

(iii) An anonymous complaints box shall be set up in a place on campus that is private in order to protect the complainant's identity. The Complaints Form shall be accessible either online through their portal or from the same place where the complaints box is.

(iv) The institution shall ensure that persons with disabilities have full and equal access to the reporting and complaints mechanisms. This includes access for persons with visual impairments, hearing impairments and other physical disabilities.

(v) A complaints committee shall be established to formally preside over sexual harassment matters.

(vi) The committee shall have rules and regulations which govern it and shall consist of staff, student representatives trained in sexual harassment management and also independent members of the community around the institution who are not members of staff in order to avoid the likelihood of bias.

a. Informal Complaints

The institution shall provide for settlement of sexual harassment and GBV cases by informal mechanisms where the case is not of a criminal nature and the complaint prefers such informal settlement. The complaints committee shall:
- afford the alleged perpetrator the right to be heard;
- if need be, and with the consent of the victim, facilitate dialogue between both parties in order to achieve an informal resolution which is acceptable to the complainant
- ensure that confidential records are kept of the complaints process;
- follow up after the outcome to ensure that the harassment has stopped;
- ensure that the procedure is carried out within reasonable time, in any case, not later than two weeks from the date that the incident is reported, depending on the circumstances.

b. Formal Complaints

The complaints committee shall:
- interview the victim and the alleged perpetrator separately;
- interview relevant third parties;
- make the final decision on whether or not the incident(s) of sexual harassment took place;
- produce a report detailing the investigations, findings and any recommendations;
- decide what the appropriate remedy including an apology, a change to working arrangements, training for the perpetrator or to refer the matter to a disciplinary committee;
- follow up to ensure implementation of the recommendations, that the behavior hasstopped and that the victim is satisfied with the outcome;
- If it is not determined that harassment took place, recommendations may still be made to ensure proper functioning of the workplace;
- Keep a record of the process and all actions taken on cases of sexual harassment and GBV;
- Ensure that the all records concerning the matter are confidential; and
- Ensure that the procedure is carried out within reasonable time, in any case, not later than two weeks from the date that a complaint was lodged, depending on the circumstances.

7.4.3 Protection and Support to Victims and Survivors of Sexual Harassment and GBV
7.4.3.1 Problem: Lack of protection and support to survivors of gender-based violence.

7.4.3.2. Policy Statement: Victims and survivors shall be protected upon reporting a case of sexual harassment and GBV, and shall be offered support by the institution.
7.4.3.3 Strategies:
The institution shall:
(i)   ensure that victims are given adequate medical attention where physical violence has occurred including emergency contraceptives and post- exposure prophylaxis treatment as appropriate;
(ii)   provide victims with psychological support such as counseling;
(iii) provide a safe house to temporarily accommodate students whose safety and wellbeing is at immediate risk;

(iv)   take swift action against perpetrators and ensure they are no longer a risk to the victim's safety and well-being;

(v)   suspend the perpetrator from the institution until the determination of the case;

(vi)   put in place a tracking mechanism to check in with survivors and ensure their safety;

(vii)   protect sexual harassment victims and witnesses from intimidation or threats of any kind;

(viii) identify, in consultation with the employers' and workers' organizations concerned and through other means, the sectors or occupations and work arrangements in which workers and other persons concerned are more exposed to violence and harassment and taking measures to effectively protect such persons.

(ix)   take all necessary measures to prevent the victimization, intimidation or reprisal of victims and witnesses of sexual harassment; and

(x)   Victims of violence and harassment in the world of work should have access to compensation in cases of psychosocial, physical or any other injury or illness which results in incapacity to work

(xi)   ensure that there are links with and details of referral systems closest to the institution.

7.4 Priority Area 4: Inclusive Education

Objectives:
- To ensure that PWD have equal access to opportunities to be enrolled or recruited.
- To provide appropriate infrastructure and information.
- To ensure equal treatment of PWD.
- To mainstream disability.

1.4.1 Discrimination

1.4.1.1 Problem: Negative attitudes and systematic discrimination of PWD continues.

1.4.2.2 Policy Statement: Negative attitudes and norms, and systematic discrimination shall be eradicated.

1.4.3.3 Strategy

(i)   All institutions shall regularly facilitate continued trainings and orientations in inclusive education and enroll PWD every year.

(ii)   All institutions shall raise awareness on disability rights and facilitate sensitization of students.

1.4.6 Participation

1.4.6.1 Problem: There is no full and effective participation for PWD.

1.4.6.2 Policy Statement: PWD shall have full and effective participation in decision making bodies.

1.4.6.3 Strategies:

(ii)   PWD shall be encouraged to participate in decision making and shall be supported by the institution.

(iii)   All institutions shall ensure that the nature of electoral processes of the students' union are inclusive and consider needs of PWD candidates.

(iv)   Office in students' union designated to PWD shall be empowered and given special attention to ensure its effectiveness.

7.5 Priority Area 5: Pandemic and Endemic (HIv and Covid-19

Objective:
- To prevent the spread of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and COVID-19.
- To increase access to sexual and reproductive health services and information.
- To ensure equal participation of students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To effectively respond to gendered effects of COVID-19

7.5.1 Prevention, Access to Information, Awareness and Behavioral Change

a. HIV/AIDS

7.5.1.1 Problems: Continued risky behaviour amongst students, unavailability of condoms, lack of awareness on HIV/AIDS.

7.5.1.2 Strategies:
The institution shall:
(i)   organize training in HIV/AIDS prevention and management during first year students' orientation and for newly recruited staff;
(ii)   regularly have HIV/AIDS awareness talks and encourage students and staff to get tested for HIV;
(iii)   adopt innovative methods such as the use of drama, music and art in HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 awareness;
(iv)   involve students in every stage of development of awareness campaign strategies;
(v)   incorporate HIV/AIDS sensitization into social events e.g. distribution of male and female condoms and HIV/AIDS information during social weekends;
(vi)   ensure that all needy female students are supported materially including supporting them in the process of obtaining a loan; and

b. COVID-19

7.5.1.3 Problems: Lack of enforcement of preventive measures, lack of holistic online learning.

7.5.1.4 Policy Statement: The institution shall effectively enforce all COVID-19 preventive measures and ensure holistic online learning for all students.

7.5.1.5 Strategies
The institution shall:
(i)   establish a task force for COVID-19 management;
(ii)   convene task force meetings on a monthly basis;
(iii)   ensure that there are adequate sanitation points at all major entries on campus;
(iv)   ensure that all students have access to face masks;
(v)   ensure that there is adequate social distancing in all classrooms, offices and all other places on campus;
(vi)   provide holistic online learning;
(vii)   develop online distance learning materials;
(viii) provide support to needy students to access online learning; and
(ix)   ensure that students with disabilities have full and equal access to online learning.

7.5.2 Provision of Resources and Support

7.5.2.1 Problem: Lack of transparency, information sharing and support.

7.5.2.2 Policy Statement: The institution shall ensure that information sharing is transparent, and that there is support for those with HIV/AIDS or COVID-19.

7.5.2.3 Strategies:

The institution shall:
(i)   ensure transparency regarding the institution's management of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19;
(ii)   create transparent and effective information sharing systems for all pandemics;
(iii)   ensure that all information is accessible to staff and students with disabilities;
(iv)   organize awareness campaigns, using media such as social media, radio, and television;
(v)   ensure that students and staff have access to HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 testing;
(vi)   support student-led clubs, societies, legal clinics etc. to engage in research, advocacy and awareness on HIV/AIDS and COVID-19;
(vii)   have isolation centres for students with COVID-19;
(viii) provide counselling to those with HIV/AIDS or COVID19; and
(ix)   create support groups for staff and students with HIV/AIDS or COVID-19.

7.5.3 Nondiscrimination and Mainstreaming

7.5.3.1 Problem: Discrimination, stigmatization of HIV/AIDS, lack of HIV/AIDS curriculum mainstreaming.

7.5.3.2 Policy Statement: Institutions shall ensure there is no HIV/AIDS discrimination and stigma, and that HIV/AIDS is appropriately mainstreamed into curricula.

7.5.3.3 Strategies:

The institutions shall:
(i)   develop an HIV/AIDS policy;
(ii)   ensure non-discrimination on the basis of HIV/AIDS or any pandemic;
(iii)   ensure there is no pre-employment HIV/AIDS testing or testing for educational opportunities;
(iv)   comply with all obligations under the HIV/AIDS (prevention and management) Act, 2011;
(v)   integrate and mainstream HIV/AIDS into the curriculum;
(vi)   allocate a percentage towards pandemics support in the budgets;
(vii)   provide material and nutritional support to HIV positive students and willing staff;
(viii) develop guidelines on pandemics planning, support and management; and
(ix)   provide regular counselling and support to all students and staff who are HIV/AIDS or COVID-19 positive.

7.5.4 Response to Gendered Effects of COVID-19

1.5.4.1 Problems: Increased domestic violence due to more time spent at home; higher risk of teenage pregnancies and failure of female students to keep up with academic obligations due to household chores.

1.5.4.2 Policy Statement: Institutions shall provide support for students experiencing domestic violence during online distance learning, continue to share sexual and reproductive health information and services, and support students failing to keep up with their studies.

1.5.4.3 Strategies:

The Institution shall

(i)   put in place remote support mechanisms for victims of domestic violence such as hotlines, facilitating remote communication between counsellors and students, etc.;

(ii)   partner with local health care providers to facilitate safe and easy access to contraceptives for students during the COVID-19 pandemic;

(iii) conduct research on the unique needs of female students in online learning due to domestic circumstances; and

(iv)   provide support to female students struggling to keep up with new teaching methods.

8. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

8.1 Implementation Principles

The implementation plan will be guided by a number of principles including the following:

- **Efficiency:** Available resources should be transformed into intended results in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness.

- **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness relates to the extent to which results of the policy achieve its outcome and the purpose. Impactful implementation requires that the purpose and outputs positively affect the lives of large numbers of the institution's community and that the wider policy objectives are achieved.

- Sustainability: Sustainability considerations ensure that the positive results of the policy's implementation are long lasting and contribute to the long-term functioning of the institution and well-being of staff and students.

8.2 Implementation Structure

In its implementation, the policy shall follow the logic of the University committee and administrative system, chaired by responsible office. At Faculty level, there will be faculty focal points that will work with Heads of Department, under the Dean or as appropriate.
There shall also be a committee to ensure gender sensitivity and responsiveness at the University. This committee will comprise of members with a variety of expertise in order to ensure intersectionality. It shall also have both staff and student representatives.

8.3 Collaboration

All staff, students and affiliates of the institution have a role to play in realizing the objectives of the gender policy, and in creating and maintaining an environment free from injustice, harassment and discrimination.

All partners, associates, contractors, and those who offer services to the institution shall be responsible for complying with the Policy.
The institution shall work closely with the Ministries responsible for education and gender, as well as NCHE to ensure that the policy is implemented in line with the National Gender Policy and other legal frameworks. The institution shall also work with development partners and

institutions. The institution, through the office responsible for communication, shall also engage the media in publicizing gender activities at the University.

8.4 Coordination unit

A Gender Co-ordination Unit shall be established. The role of the Gender Co-ordination Unit shall be:

- To facilitate the achievement of gender policy objectives at departmental, faculty and university level.
- To operate as a source of expertise on gender mainstreaming at the institution.
- To keep gendered records, track and facilitate implementation and monitoring of the policy
- To liaise with Ministries responsible for Gender and for Higher Education, NCHE, Development Partners and NGOs on current gender reforms at local, national, regional and global levels.

Each Faculty and/or Department shall appoint a Gender Mainstreaming Coordinator/Desk Officer. Further, the Students and Staff Unions shall each, establish positions of gender mainstreaming co-coordinators /Desk Officer.

8.5 Financial Resources

Resource accumulation: Human, technical, material and financial resources are needed for effective policy implementation.

Effective resource management shall require:

- Identifying appropriate funding requirements to be used throughout the implementation process. All material relating to financial resources developed during the policy design phase should be used in the implementation phase. This is to ensure that resourcing strategies continue to be fit for purpose and also to enable decision-makers to see how the implementation is tracking against key milestones.

- Formulating a resource management strategy outlining the delivery and management approach. The strategy should detail how all resources will be managed to support delivery. Further detail of resources required to achieve the policy's broader outcomes must be provided, including acquisition and management of resources, how long they will be needed for and estimated costs.

- Establishing agency resourcing requirements: Human resources are fundamental in effective implementation, so there must be an appropriate variety of skills and expertise. Different types of expertise will be required for different phases of implementation.

8.6 Capacity: People with Expertise and Training

In order for the policy to be effectively implemented, there is a need for people with a wide variety of expertise, training and experience in different fields, such as:

- Experts in sexual harassment prevention, protection and response
- Financial accounting experts
- Trained HIV/AIDS experts, particularly those experienced in HIV/AIDS management in universities
- Community members experienced in gender-based violence interventions
- Experts in gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation
- Experts in advocacy and awareness of policies and gender issues

- ICT experts
- Communications experts for awareness and facilitating sharing of information
- Experts in inclusive education

8.7 Dissemination and Awareness of policy and its contents

A sensitization programme shall be organized on the gender policy for the University community, including both staff and students. The policy will be made available to all. Contents of the policy as well as implementation structures shall be prominently posted on University websites; sent electronically to the school community; available at various locations throughout the campus; and included in the university's major publications such as handbooks, codes of conduct and catalogs for students, faculty and staff.

For first year students in particular, sensitization of the policy and its contents shall take place during their orientation period when they are acquainted with key information about the institution. The students shall be given information packs which include both a detailed version of the policy, as well as a simplified version. Newly recruited staff shall also be furnished with the policy info-pack in both hard and electronic copies.

9. GLOSSARY

Gender mainstreaming requires in-depth analysis, the development of tools for gender integration, capacity building of technical teams, the training and sensitization of organs, institutions and beneficiary sectors and skills for monitoring and evaluation, as well as the drafting of reports.

10. DEFINITION OF TECHNICAL TERMS

CEDAW: The Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides the basis for realising equality between men and women through ensuring women's access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life; and state parties have agreed to take appropriate measures including legislation and temporary special measures so that women can enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms.

EMPOWERMENT: The process of "conscientisation" which builds critical analytical skills for an individual to gain self-confidence in order to take control of her or his life. Empowerment of women is an essential process in the transformation of gender relations because it addresses the structural and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination.

ENGENDERING: In Gender studies, engendering refers to the process of integrating gender considerations and concerns into words, action and assessment.

GENDER AWARENESS: A state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs. It is also the recognition of the differences in the interests, needs and roles of women and men in society and how they result in differences in power, status and privilege. It also means the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequity and discrimination.

GENDER BLIND: The situation where potentially differential policy impacts on men and women are ignored

GENDER BUDGET: A budgeting method that analyses the incidence of budgets on men and women and girls and boys. Gender budgeting entails analyses of revenue and expenditure impacts so as to avoid or correct gender imbalances.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION: Differential treatment to individuals on the grounds of gender.

GENDER EQUALITY: A situation where women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential; are able to contribute equally to national political, economic, social and cultural development; and benefit equally from the results. Gender Equality entails that the underlying causes of discrimination are systematically identified and removed in order to give women and men equal opportunities. The concept of Gender Equality, as used in this policy framework, takes into account women's existing subordinate positions within social relations and aims at the restructuring of society so as to eradicate male domination. Therefore, equality is understood to include both formal

equality and substantive equality; not merely simple equality to men.

GENDER EQUITY: The fair and just distribution of all means of opportunities and resources between women and men.

GENDER GAP: A difference in any aspect of the socio economic status of women and men, arising from the different social roles ascribed by society for women and men.

GENDER INDICATOR: An indicator that captures gender related changes in society over time and in relation to a norm (Beck, 1999).

GENDER ISSUES: these are issues that arise when the relationships between women and men, their roles, privileges, status and positions are identified and analysed. Gender issues arise where inequalities and inequities are shown to exist between people purely on the basis of their being female or male. The fact that gender and gender differences are socially constructed is itself a primary issue to deal with.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: Refers to a process that is goal oriented. It recognises that most institutions consciously or unconsciously serve the interests of men and encourages institutions to adopt a gender perspective in transforming themselves. It promotes the full participation of women in decision-making so that women's needs move from the margins to the centre of development planning and resource allocation.

GENDER NEUTRAL: The assumption that policies, programmes and project interventions do not have a gender dimension and therefore affect men and women in the same way. In practice, policies intended to be gender neutral can be gender blind.

GENDER PERSPECTIVE: An approach in which the ultimate goal is to create equity and equality between women and men. Such an approach has a set of tools for and guidelines on how to identify the impact on development of the relations and roles of women and men.

GENDER POLICY: An organisation's policy that integrates gender in the mainstream of its programme activities, where the policy also designates institutional arrangements, responsibilities, management functions and tools/guidelines for mainstreaming.

GENDER RESPONSIVE: Refers to a planning process in which programmes and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arise out of socially constructed differences between women and men.

GENDER SENSITIVE: The state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including differences in their needs, as well as to the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposefully to address them.

GENDER STEREOTYPING: Constant portrayal in the media, the press or in the education system, of women and men occupying certain roles according to the socially constructed gender division of labour and expectations in behaviour.

GENDER TRAINING: The provision of formal learning experiences and skills in order to increase gender analysis and awareness skills, which serve to recognise and address gender issues in the programming process. Training can include the three dimensions of political: introducing gender concepts and analysis, the professional: providing staff with "how–to" skills and the personal: challenging an individual's gender attitudes and stereotypes.

GENDER: In this policy framework document, refers to the social roles allocated respectively to women and to men in particular societies and at particular times. Such roles, and the differences between them, are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors and are characterised in most societies by unequal power relations. Gender is distinguished from sex which is biologically determined. It is also defined as the socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women, boys and girls, which give them unequal value, opportunities and life chances. It also refers to typically masculine and feminine characteristics, abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in society. These characters are time bound and changeable.

POLICY: Guiding principles to a course of action arrived at by decision-makers to address a particular issue or issues.

SEX: The biological state of being a male or female. Sex is not equal to gender.

10. ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	FULL DESCRIPTION
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
Chanco	Chancellor College
CoM	College of Medicine
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
FDGs	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEA	Gender Equality Act
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
KCN	Kamuzu College of Nursing
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDGS II	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
ODL	Online Distance Learning
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNIMA	University of Malawi
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
HP	Harmful practices