

WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY IN AFRICA



Addressing gender disparity and fostering equity in University Education

FROM THE QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT

KNOW YOUR POLICIES

Here, we are highlighting just 5 of the many policies of the University.

1 QUALITY ASSURANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

PURPOSE

The global and continental demand for knowledge and high-end skills is growing (African Union, 2017) and the Women's University in Africa (WUA), through quality research, innovation and training is well placed to play a central role in equipping graduates with internationally recognised requisite know-how and competences in line with its Transformational Strategy 2023-2027. At national level, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 highlight the centrality of quality higher education in delivering teaching, research, community service, innovation and industrialisation or Education 5.0 (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (2019) Strategic Plan 2019-2023). This is in sync with the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education Act (Chapter 25: 27) which obligates higher education institutions to have institutional quality assurance systems for the accreditation and evaluation of courses, programmes and degrees and standards of physical, financial and material resources as well as management and operational procedures supporting teaching, research and community service and more recently innovation and industrialisation. It is within this context that this policy document has been developed.

The main purpose of this Quality Assurance, Teaching and Learning Policy is to delineate a clear framework of structures, standards and procedures for quality assurance and management within the University. The policy covers teaching and non-teaching departments. The interpretation of this policy rests with the University Quality Assurance Committee as administered by the Quality Assurance, Teaching and Learning Directorate.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The WUA Quality Assurance, Teaching and Learning Policy seeks to:

- Assure internal and external stakeholders and ZIMCHE that the University's policies, systems and procedures for the development, maintenance, and enhancement of quality in its educational provisioning and support services are working efficiently and effectively;
- Establish and develop an all-embracing and functional institutional quality assurance management system; Establish and develop a quality assurance culture across all University operations;
- Empower staff and students in the execution and implementation of quality assurance management mechanisms and processes;
- Coordinate and monitor quality assurance activities within various entities of WUA i.e. Faculties, Directorates, Centres, Schools, Departments, Units and support services;
- Solicit and analyse feedback from stakeholders regarding academic and support service provisioning and quality experiences at WUA with a view to continuous improvement; and Provide guidance in identifying internal and external standards and criteria that are regionally and globally recognised.

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF POLICY

Women's University in Africa is committed to equality, dignity and non-discrimination of all persons and to creating a conducive environment of reciprocal respect among members of the University community. WUA recognizes that the conducive academic and professional environment includes the regard for the rights and feelings of all, free from sexual harassment. WUA affirms that sexual harassment is a violation of the fundamental rights, dignity, and integrity of a person and that it undermines the advancement of learning, dissemination of knowledge, research and productive work. WUA is therefore committed to ensuring the establishment of institutional mechanisms for the prevention of sexual harassment within the university community.

It is a core principle of WUA to ensure gender equality and justice through all WUA intervention and practices. The document is WUA's reaffirmation to zero tolerance to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of employees, students and external service providers occurring in the university is unlawful and shall not be tolerated. Further, any retaliation of any individual for co-operating in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unacceptable.

WUA takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously and will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment, and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, prompt and appropriate corrective action as is necessary shall be taken, including disciplinary action. All complaints of sexual harassment will be treated with respect and in confidence.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Sensitize employees and students about their rights through training and dissemination of information about sexual harassment.
- Protect the rights of employees and students against sexual harassment through the creation of an institutional framework that responds to complaints of acts of sexual harassment.
- Provide redress including disciplinary action where appropriate.
- Create an institutional framework that encourages victims of sexual harassment to exercise their rights and take action to refuse to succumb pressures of sexual harassment.

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GENDER AND DIVERSITY POLICY

PURPOSE

WUA is committed to supporting the achievement of gender equality in Zimbabwe and throughout Africa. The rights of women and girls are alienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In fostering gender equality and reducing gender disparity in higher education as stated in the Women's University Charter, WUA recognises the need to acknowledge the diversity of women and men who interact with the university and differ in terms of age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, disability, and other social differences. Therefore, WUA has the role and mandate to establish and implement a gender and diversity policy that would be consonant with the international, regional and national instruments. Such a policy would promote gender equality, equity, women empowerment and inclusion within the University and Zimbabwean society in general. This Gender and Diversity Policy reflect the University's commitment to proactively advance equality and inclusive practices in staff and student recruitment and admissions processes, research activity, teaching and learning, within the campus environment, professional services the university offers, and community engagement initiatives.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the policy are:

- To support diverse women and girls, men and boys in realization of their full human rights;
- To reduce gender inequalities in access to, utilisation and control over the resources and benefits of WUA;
- To guide mainstreaming of gender and diversity in all University programme areas and activities.
- To ensure that gender equality and diversity is a mandatory theme that is understood, analysed and addressed in all aspects of WUA work, policy, planning, programmes, management and communications.
- To guide the development of proactive policies and strategies that address gender inequality and social exclusion
- To ensure that equality and equity considerations underpin all WUA human resource policies, procedures and practices.
- To ensure that gender and diversity inclusion training is provided on an on-going basis to all those working with WUA and is reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that it is effective in enhancing equality and equity awareness and good practice.

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DISABILITY POLICY

PURPOSE

The Women's University in Africa (WUA) is committed to supporting the achievement of gender equality in Zimbabwe and throughout Africa. The rights of women and girls are alienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In fostering gender equality and reducing gender disparity in higher education as stated in the Women's University Charter, WUA recognises the need to acknowledge the diversity of women and men who interact with the university and differ in terms of age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, disability, and other social differences. Therefore, WUA has the role and mandate to establish and implement a Disability Policy that would be consonant with the international, regional and national instruments. This policy outlines the University's commitment to creating and fostering a culture in which students, staff and visitors are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged because of their disability. The Disability Policy intention is to create and maintain parity in consultation with students and staff living with disabilities to ensure access to education and the University's resources.

The Disability Policy resonates with the Women's University in Africa Transformational Strategy 2023-2027 which called for the establishment of a Gender and Diversity Centre. There is the Gender and Diversity Policy that reflects the University's commitment to proactively advance equality and inclusive practices in staff and student recruitment and admissions processes, research activity, teaching and learning, within the campus environment, professional services the university offers, and community engagement

initiatives. Against this background the University strives to create an enabling learning and occupational environment in consultation with students and staff with disabilities, where their learning and career aspirations are supported and enabled by the University and where their talents are identified, nurtured and developed.

This policy and the benefits afforded by it are based upon voluntary disclosure and self-identification, unless the disability is visible and self-explanatory. The University reserves its right to verify a person's disability status based on medical evidence, should it deem it necessary

OBJECTIVES

The WUA Disability Policy seeks to:

- Provide a framework for availing resources for disability inclusion in all spheres of university life;
- Remove inequalities experienced by disabled persons by defining access as including physical and social aspects; and
- Address cultural, physical, social and other barriers that prevent people with disabilities from entering, being employed and developing their careers in the University.

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BEREAVEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the nature of assistance which the University shall provide in the unfortunate event of the death of a staff member or that of their immediate relative.

POLICY STATEMENT

The University is concerned about the health and well-being of its employees and recognises that expression of sympathy is a means of reinforcing this concern. This expression also provides an opportunity for the bereaved family to be made aware of the assistance that the University community provides.

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all Women's University in Africa full-time staff members.