



UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES



**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
POLICY**



UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH
AND ALLIED SCIENCES
— *Health for development* —

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Strategy for Bottom Line Performance

2019

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Background

The University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) recognises that in order to be competitive for the best available talent it must position itself as a University that provides, and continually encourages an environment with genuine opportunity for advancement and success for all members/staff. Diversity and Inclusion initiatives are important in our efforts to recruit the best candidates and retain valued employees. We believe that every individual in UHAS should be treated with dignity and respect and be part of a working and learning environment that is free from barriers, regardless of age, race, religion or belief, sex (male or female) and pregnancy (maternity status).

This Policy outlines how we will consult, communicate and engage with all to advance equality in our everyday business. The promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion concerns all of us and it is the responsibility of all members of the University. It is expected that we will contribute to ensuring that UHAS continues to be a safe, welcoming and productive environment. UHAS views harassment or discrimination against any member of staff or students on any grounds as a serious disciplinary offence.

Purpose

University of Health and Allied Sciences appreciates the value inherent in a diverse workforce and students. The strength of our Human Resource is impacted by our diversity efforts and is critical to UHAS's success. UHAS wishes to be recognised as an institution where all its staff and members are appreciated for the skills they bring to the University Community. A community that implements the policies and practices that support the diverse needs of its employees and students, becomes attractive to both prospective staff and students. Hence a good corporate image with respect to Diversity and Inclusion enables us to broaden the pool of applicants to choose from including the top talent from across all diverse groups. As a workplace that supports diversity we will utilise talented members/staff to their maximum ability. Our best means to cultivate diversity lies in maximising the potential of the talent that we already have. Members/staff who are able to fully utilise their skills and talents are likely to stay with the institution and grow with it.

Our Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

UHAS is committed to maintaining an excellent record in teaching and research by ensuring equality of opportunity for all, fostered in an environment of mutual respect and dignity. We will actively manage diversity and inclusion, finding ways of utilising the differences that exist,

in order to improve our relationship with all members/staff, students or the community. This requires that we actively seek to accommodate the unique needs of many different member/staff and students irrespective of race, cultural difference, social status, class, religion or any other factor that is a crucial diversity issue.

Diversity may result from a range of factors; origin, marital status, disability, family responsibilities, ethical belief, colour, age, sex (male or female), religion, race, cultural heritage, lifestyle, education, physical ability, appearance, language or other factors. At UHAS, we value the differences between people and the contribution these differences make to the University Community.

Objectives

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives have direct benefits to the University of Health and Allied Sciences internally and externally as follows:

- ✓ It emphasises equal employment opportunity with respect to hiring, training and career advancement.
- ✓ It provides guideline and procedure in dealing with harassment
- ✓ It increases the morale, productivity and commitment of our members/staff.
- ✓ Helps create an environment where members/staff and students feel engaged and empowered to produce quality work and innovation.
- ✓ Increases team commitment and a sense of belongingness among members/staff and students at all levels.

As productivity requires optimal utilisation of talent, feeling undervalued or marginalised prevents an individual from full commitment to the organisation.

Scope

This policy applies to all UHAS members and staff in any capacity.

Procedure

It is the responsibility of all to create an environment where:

- ✓ There is tolerance of differences. The University will ensure that all members and staff are treated fairly and with respect and dignity.
- ✓ The ability to contribute and access opportunities is based on merit.
- ✓ The University will adopt and actively encourage those practices and procedures that enable members/staff to contribute to the best of their ability.

- ✓ Inappropriate attitudes or behaviours are confronted.
- ✓ The University will treat any instance of inappropriate behaviour seriously and confront attitudes based on inappropriate stereotypes.

Equal Opportunity in Employment

Specifically, the University will provide equal opportunity with respect to employment and employment conditions, including:

Hiring:

All recruitment and selection documentation, procedures and practices will be non-discriminatory. Documentation, including person specifications, job advertisements, application forms, contracts, etc. will include no direct or inferred discrimination.

UHAS procedures, including interviews, reference checking and testing will be undertaken in such a way so as to ensure the absence of discriminatory practice.

Training:

All internal and external training opportunities will be based on merit and in the light of University and individual needs based on the institutional financial strength.

Career Advancement:

All decisions associated with career advancement, including promotions, transfers, and other assignments, will meet organisational needs and be determined on merit.

Equal Opportunity in Admission

In line with UHAS best practices with respect to admissions, procedures including interviews, testing will be undertaken in such a way so as to ensure the absence of discriminatory practices. Please refer to the UHAS Admissions Policy document for full details with regards to admissions procedures.

The Work Place and Harassment

The University will ensure that all members and staff have access to an environment that is free from harassment. Harassment is demeaning and contrary to the spirit of this policy. This means that the University will not permit unwanted conduct based on a members/staff personal circumstances or characteristics. In particular, the University will not tolerate sexual harassment. This Policy takes cognisance of the Internal Sexual Harassment Policy of the University. Please refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy of the University for more details.

Definition: Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other unwanted conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome and uninvited behaviour or comments of a sexual nature. Under law, sexual harassment is illegal.

Sexual harassment may include unwelcome actions such as:

- ✓ offensive gestures, jokes or the display of offensive pictures (e.g. in an electronic format)
- ✓ leering, patting, pinching, touching or unnecessary familiarity
- ✓ persistent and unwelcome demands or subtle pressures for sexual favours; or
- ✓ offensive comments on physical appearance, dress or private life.

Such a behaviour could reasonably be expected to make a staff member feel offended and humiliated; or intimidated and frightened. If you are not sure whether certain behaviour constitutes sexual harassment, you should discuss this with one of the **sexual harassment contact officers (sexual harassment committee)**.

Responsibility of Leadership

The Leadership/Senior Management/Management (Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Directors, Deans, HODs, Unit Heads) of the University are responsible for making sure that all members/staff and supervisors understand that harassment will not be tolerated at UHAS and for taking early corrective action to deal with behaviour which may be offensive or intimidating.

It is Senior Management/Management's responsibility to take prompt action if there is reason to believe harassment exists, to try and resolve the issue confidentially and to prevent further incidents of sexual harassment from occurring. If a Director, Dean, HOD, Unit Head feels that a reported incident might constitute harassment and the nature of the complaint is outside their expertise, the matter should be reported to the Director of Human Resources.

Responsibility of Members and Staff

All Members or Staff are expected to respect the rights of others and never encourage harassment. If any member or staff becomes aware that a co-worker is being harassed, they can help prevent it by offering support to the person being harassed.

This can be done by:

- ✓ Offering to act as a witness if the person being harassed decides to report the incident;
- ✓ Refusing to join in with any harassing activity; and
- ✓ Backing them up or supporting them to say no.

It is not a responsibility of any member or staff to say anything to the alleged harasser or to spread rumours about someone. If a staff member takes part in spreading rumours, they may be subject to defamation action.

What can you do if you are being sexually harassed?

If possible, promptly inform the offender directly or in writing that their behaviour is offensive and unacceptable and request that it stop immediately; or if you feel you are not able to do this, discuss the matter with your supervisor; or Contact the Director of Human Resources who will deal with the complaint. At this stage, the complaint may be informal or formal. This is your choice. If you wish to proceed with a formal complaint you will need to follow the formal complaint process. Always keep a record of or diary of incidents noting what happened, when and the names of witnesses.

Role of Sexual Harassment Contact Officers

The Role of Sexual Harassment Contact Officers involves:

- ✓ assisting to clarify whether the behaviour could be sexual harassment
- ✓ discussing ways the problem can be resolved either informally or through UHAS's formal complaints procedure, and
- ✓ remaining neutral in the sense that his/her focus is on reconciliation of a dispute and not siding with one party against the other.

Conciliation

Once any complaint of sexual harassment has been made either formally or informally with either an HOD/Dean/Director, Sexual Harassment Contact Officers or Director, Human Resources, the focus will be on conciliation as the preferred model for resolution of complaints.

Sexual harassment complaints procedure

Informal complaints

Informal ways of dealing with sexual harassment can include the following action:

- ✓ You may wish to deal with the situation yourself but may also wish to seek advice on possible strategies from a supervisor, sexual harassment contact officer or Director of Human Resources.
- ✓ You may ask your supervisor to speak to the alleged harasser on your behalf.
- ✓ The supervisor will privately convey your concerns and reiterate UHAS's sexual harassment policy without assessing the merits of the case.
- ✓ A complaint is made, the harasser admits the behaviour, and the complaint is resolved through conciliation or counselling of the harasser.
- ✓ HOD/Dean/Director observes unacceptable conduct occurring and takes independent action even though no complaint has been made.

Formal complaints

This procedure assumes that informal resolution of the grievance has been unsuccessful or is inappropriate.

- ✓ A formal complaint of sexual harassment will need to be in writing and should be made to the Director, Human Resources.
- ✓ The Director, Human Resources or his representative will undertake a preliminary investigation of the complaint and will then submit a confidential written report to the Registrar.
- ✓ The Registrar (or delegate) may carry out further investigations if necessary, including referral to an external mediator/conciliator.
- ✓ The Registrar (or delegate) will then take appropriate remedial and/ or disciplinary action.
- ✓ All parties to the complaint will be advised of the outcome.

Principles

The principles which apply to the sexual harassment complaints procedure are:

- ✓ Everyone has a right to be treated with respect
- ✓ Everyone has a right to "due process", i.e., the person against whom the allegation is made has the right to know what is alleged against them, the right to put their case in reply and the right for any decision to be made by an impartial decision maker.

- ✓ Wherever possible a non-adversarial and non-judgemental resolution to the problem will be pursued
- ✓ Complaints will be treated in confidence and where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed this will be clearly indicated.

Options for Remedies

The Vice Chancellor (or delegate) shall determine appropriate action as a result of investigation. If someone has a complaint made against them and is found to have sexually harassed the complainer, disciplinary action will follow.

The disciplinary action will depend on the circumstances of the case, but can range from counselling the offender to termination of the offender's employment.

Confidentiality

An accusation of sexual harassment can be potentially defamatory, especially if confidentiality is not observed and a person's reputation is unfairly damaged. Discussions, information and records related to complaints will remain factual and confidential.

All documentation and details of sexual harassment enquiries and grievances will be kept securely by the Director, HR.

Timelines

Except in exceptional circumstances a formal complaint may not be made later than 12 months after the date on which the sexual harassment is alleged to have taken place.

Racial harassment

Racial harassment is any conduct based on racial differences affecting the dignity of men and women at work. Under law, racial harassment is illegal. All are required to ensure that the workplace is harassment free, and to ensure that complainants or witnesses are not victimised in any way. Any reports of sexual, racial or other harassment will be treated seriously, confidentially, and sympathetically by the University.

Responsibility

In order for this policy to operate, it is essential that every member/staff is responsible for the elimination of discriminatory practices, and for the creation of a diverse and tolerant workplace. In particular, all have responsibility for the maintenance and promotion of an equal opportunity workplace.

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, will be taken against anyone found to be guilty of a breach of this policy.

Support

The University is committed to supporting employees in the achievement of a diverse workplace. All are responsible for developing and encouraging a positive environment, where all members/staff are treated with respect and dignity. All are required to take responsibility for reporting breaches of this policy, and should themselves act in accordance with its spirit.

The Human Resources Directorate is readily available to support ongoing training and education in diversity, equal opportunity and harassment, in order to achieve our objective of dignity at work.

The Vice Chancellor will proactively monitor institutional performance in meeting these standards and policies, and set targets for the achievement and maintenance of this policy.

Review

The Policy Committee will review this Policy on a regular basis.

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PUBLISHED BY:

Directorate of Public Affairs

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