Gender and Safeguarding Policy

Mwanza University,
Training for the World

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Schedule of Amendments and Approvals

Version	Revision No	Approval Reference	Date
2021	V 1.0	Minute No. 2.3	30th July 2021

FOREWORD

This policy is guided by national policies and international declarations such as the World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), both of which draw on the Universal Human Rights and Non-discrimination. The policies and declarations are aimed, inter alia, at ensuring equal opportunities to education development by addressing the question of marginalisation and exclusion of girls and women, urging the international community to set targets for universal primary education for all and gender balance at all levels of education.

Gender in Higher Education and Safeguarding
This policy is necessary at the inception of the Mwanza University to ensure gender and safeguarding concerns are addressed right from the beginning. This policy provides a clear vision for guiding both staff and students, engendering all the processes, policies, procedures and practices so that women and men at the University are assured of equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities in all the spheres, structures and organs of the University. Moreover, this policy guides on creating a safe learning space. I am convinced that the success of this policy is the responsibility of all persons at policy, decision making and implementation levels of the Mwanza University (MzU).

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Vice Chancellor, Mwanza University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

MzU:	Mwanza University
VC:	Vice Chancellor
DVC–ARC:	Deputy Vice Chancellor–Academic, Research and Consultancy
DVC–PFA:	Deputy Vice Chancellor–Planning, Finance and Administration
GSU:	Gender and Safeguarding Unit
DGSD:	Department Gender and Safeguarding Desk

1. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.1 Sex and Gender
Gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles, responsibilities, relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, expectations, privileges, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the women and men, boys and girls on a differential basis. The roles are socially constructed and learnt changes over time, and vary widely within and across cultures. In contrast, sex is the biological make-up of male and female people, which is universal and determined at birth and does not change over time, nor differs from place to place.

1.2 Gender Equality
Equality is based on the idea that no individual should be less equal in opportunity, access to resources and benefits or in human rights than others should. Under gender equality therefore, women and men have equal right to access and control, over resources and benefits, participation in politics and decision-making, gainful employment and so forth.

1.3 Gender Equity
Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or different treatment but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities, access to resources, and control over resources. Gender equity is a step towards gendere quality, women's and men's empowerment and it embraces affirmative action where and when necessary.

1.4 Gender Mainstreaming
Gender mainstreaming refers to a process of assessing and bridging of gender gaps/imbalances. Specifically, it is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of designing, implementing; monitoring and evaluating programmes and activities in the socio-economic and political spheres of the society.

1.5 Safeguarding
Safeguarding in the context of this policy is defined as actions or interventions taken to protect the rights of all the people; specifically, vulnerable adults (or young people) and to prevent and respond to any forms of harm or abuse caused by sexual exploitation, and any form of corruption or bullying. Vulnerable adults include people with physical disability and all forms of disability (mental, skin, vision, hearing and others), moreover, it includes boys and girls in the learning space.

1.6 Harassment
Harassment refers to persistent disturbance, torment, or bother. In other words, harassment implies creating unpleasant or hostile situation for especially by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct. In this context, sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when either:
a) Conduct is made as a term or condition for an individual's employment, education, living environment or participation in a University community.
b) The acceptance or refusal of such conduct is used as the basis or factor in decisions affecting an individual's employment, education, or living environment.
c) The conduct unreasonably affects an individual's employment or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that

person's employment, education, living environment or participating in a University community activities/ assignment.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

2.1 Policy Goal

The main goal of this Gender and Safeguarding Policy for Mwanza University (MzU) isto attain gender equality and equity between women and men, and to make the MzU a safe working and learning space. The ultimate objective of this policy is to facilitate gender mainstreaming of programmes and activities, which shall eventually establish a gender balanced and sensitized University community. The policy is built from the national commitment to gender equality, which is in line with the Beijing Declarationand Platform for Action of 1995, to which the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is committed.

This Policy identifies measures to address gender inequality and inequity that may take place in the context of national and global spheres. The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania for instance, provides for recognition of equality of persons, and has incorporated a Bill of Rights, which bans discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, and race. The Constitution establishes the principle of affirmative action as a measure to rectify the historical gender imbalances.

The general gender imbalance is a reflection of the patriarchy system that has been in existence and is perpetuated by the socioeconomic, cultural and legal frameworks that are in place. The number of female students enrolled at the University, for example, is lower than that of male students because the societal culture and norms influence whose bearing negatively affects girls' performance, thus limiting their access to secondary andtertiary education. For instance, while the enrolment of girls in primary schools is 50%, in secondary schools, girls are 46% of the total enrolment. Fewer and fewer girls are enrolled in higher learning institutions whereby at the University level generally, girls are about 35% of the total enrolment.

The University shall start taking measures early to address gender and safeguarding issues in policies and governance structure and different processes put in place. This is on the will of the institution, and commitment to address the gender imbalances and safeguarding processes.

The policy will further comply with the Universities Act of 2005, which provides for gender equality, balance and equity as stipulated by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU). The Act is fully anchored on the Higher Education Policy focusingon ensuring gender equality and equity.

2.2 Relevant Government Policies and Legislation

The policy is based on the following key policy documents:

a) The National Gender Policy, which is a result of review of Policy on Women in Development in Tanzania (2000).
b) The Education and Training policy that calls for equality and equity in accessing education in Tanzania (Higher Education Development Program 2010).
c) The existence of the Employment Policy, Community Development Policy, Women Affairs and Management Policy, Gender and Development Policy, Family Development Policy, Youth and Development Policy, Social Welfare Policy and Civil

Servant Policy.

2.3 Best Practices to Address Gender Imbalances
a) The University is committed to establish a Gender and Safeguarding Unit (GSU), which is an indication of MzU's commitment towards addressing gender and safeguarding issues at the institution.
b) Affirmative action during student enrolment.
c) Affirmative action during staff employment.

2.4 Scope of Application
The MzU Gender and Safeguarding Policy shall be applicable to all MzU staff and students, and all academic and administrative units.

3. BENCHMARKING

Benchmarking was done through documentary review, phone calls and/or physical visits tothe following institutions and documents:
a) Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS);
b) University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM);
c) Makerere University (MU);
d) Women in Development Policy (WID) (1992);
e) Women and Gender Development Policy (2000);
f) The United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Community Development Gender and Children National Strategy for Gender Development;
g) Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP);
h) The WHO Gender Policy – Integrating Gender Perspectives in the work of WHO 2002;
i) The Open University of Tanzania (OUT); and
j) INASP Safeguarding and whistleblowing frameworks

3.1 Lessons Learnt From Benchmarking
Some of the institutions where benchmarking was conducted had both gender policy and anti-sexual harassment policy separately, however some had only gender policy in place. The gender policies of some institutions embedded issues of anti-sexual harassment. In our case this policy includes gender, safeguarding and anti-sexual harassment, which falls within safeguarding. This is to make administration and implementation of the policy more effective and efficient.

3.2 Approval Processes
The draft policy was sent to all stakeholders for comments and inputs before being sent to Senate and Human Resource Management Committee (HRMC) for discussion and forwarded to the Planning and Finance Committee (PFC) for approval on Financial implications and finally to the University Council for final approval.

4. VISION, MISSION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

4.1 Vision
"Having an institution that observes and maintains equal opportunities andsafeguards
the rights of both men and women in providing world–class training, research and
services by 2026".

4.2 Mission

"Creating effective and enabling framework to guide the development of regulations, procedures and practices that will ensure a safe working and learning space, equal rights and opportunities for both gender and people with special needs in order to cultivate the professional and intellectual capacity of students and staff".

4.3 Objectives

The Gender and Safeguarding Policy aims at achieving the following objectives:
- Promote gender balance in student enrolment, performance, achievement and retention.
- Promote gender mainstreamed curricula, research and consultancy programmes.
- Enhance gender equity and equality in staff recruitment, development, training and retention.
- Enhance University governance to promote safeguarding, gender balance and mainstreaming in its guidelines and procedures
- Ensure all MzU policies clearly express focus on gender equity and safeguarding
- Gender equity and equality to become part and parcel of the university organisational culture.
- Ensure zero tolerance on all forms of harassment and harm at the University

4.4 Core Values

Six core values guide the University in accomplishing its vision, mission, and objectives and functions:
a) Effective governance – The University will adopt a leadership style, which is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law.
b) Moral standards and integrity – The University will uphold and ensure accuracy, professional ethics, honesty, corporate social responsibility and human respect in pursuit of its functions.
c) Transparency and accountability – The University leadership will ensure openness, teamwork, participatory management and answerability in decision-making and implementation of all MzU activities.
d) Innovation and partnerships – In performing its core functions, the University would attempt to be creative, cherish novelty and work closely with its stakeholders, including students, staff, government and private institutions, NGOs, civil-society groups, service providers, development partners, and other Universities, both local and elsewhere.
e) Client satisfaction – In performing its core functions, the University would provide customers with adequate information, be transparent, use professional and friendly staff, and offer high-quality services.
f) Equity and safeguarding – This University is an equal-opportunity institution committed to protecting vulnerable groups.

5. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 Implementation of the Gender and Safeguarding Policy

The implementation of the gender and safeguarding policy will be supported by the MzU organization structure. An independent Unit called Gender and Safeguarding Unit (GSU), which will be headed by a Coordinator who shall be an academic member of good standing, will coordinate the Policy. The GSU shall operate under VC and will be supported by Department Gender and Safeguarding Desk (DGSD) at the level of Departments. There shall be supporting staff for GSU comprising a counsellor, the Head of Students' Welfare (HSW), and an administrator who shall be the secretary to support the daily functions of the unit. The GSU shall also include student members who shall participate during conflict resolution involving students. A coordinator and two members in gender balance and a person with special needs (where necessary), and two students' representatives taking

cognisance of gender balance shall head DGSD. The Coordinators shall receive complaints or issues from the Departments. The DGSD coordinators shall invite the counsellor from GSU in resolving issues presented.

5.2 The GSU Conflict Resolution Meetings Membership

There shall be GSU conflict resolution meetings whenever conflicts are presented to the GSU for resolution. The VC (or a representative of the vice chancellor) shall chair such meetings and membership shall includethe following:

a) The GSU members;
b) Legal Counsel;
c) Head of Human Resources Department;
d) Head of Students' Welfare; and
e) Two MzUSO representatives in gender balance.

6. POLICY STATEMENTS

An overview of the major frameworks of MzU shows incorporation of principles of gender equality and equity in the University's charter, and other key frameworks such as Students' Bylaws, Staff Recruitment, Promotion and Development Criteria, Research and Innovation, Publication, Collaboration and Consultancy Guidelines and Regulations, and Library Policy. However, this Policy was deemed necessary to specifically close any policy gaps on Gender and safeguarding implementation guideline and to guide on the continuous review of the University governance tools. The University shall continue to review this Policy as well as all its policies and frameworks with a view of making them current and gender responsive.

6.1 The Draft Mwanza University Charter

The Draft University Charter as a key instrument to govern the institution and for the purpose of accountability, it is important for it to portray all aspects of gender and safeguarding. This involves striving towards the National goal of attaining 50/50 percentage between women and men in all governance positions and representation in various institutional and decision-making bodies.

Affirmative Statement in the Draft University Charter

Under article 7.1.2 (4) the Draft Charter has clearly stated that the composition of council members shall as far as possible consist of members of both sexes on an equal basis, and so that, in any event, at least one-third of the membership shall be women. The Gender and Safeguarding Policy is a guiding tool for the University to work hard towards gender mainstreaming in governance andrepresentation. There shall be a gender and safeguarding unit, which will have representation in particular of specific groups at the institution decision-making bodies such as academic and administrative units, Senate and Council.

Policy Statement

The University shall work towards realizing equal representation of men and women in all institutional governance positions and representation in various decision-makingbodies. The University shall institute affirmative action during search for leaders to facilitate attainment of equal number of men and women at all governance levels.

The University shall ensure that all frameworks to include affirmative statements that guide policy implementation and establishment of a gender and safeguarding unit in the institutional organisation. A conducive environment shall be ensured to reduce, eliminate and protect its

community against incidences of sexual harassment and discrimination at the University. The University shall strive to put in place counselling services and disciplinary measures.

6.2 The Staff Recruitment, Promotion and Development Criteria

An institution that is gender sensitive has staff recruitment, development and training policies, programmes and plans that address gender imbalances and discrimination.

Policy Statement

Mwanza University shall strive to attain an equal number of female and male staff and facilitate their career development. Each department and administrative unit shall institute affirmative action during recruitment to facilitate attainment of equal number of male and female staff. The University shall give male and female staff equal opportunities for professional development according to the existing staff development policy.

Affirmative Statement for Action

Whenever two students or members of staff have equal qualifications and there is only one vacant position, the female contender shall be given priority

6.3 Mwanza University Research and Innovation, Publication, Collaboration and Consultancy Guidelines and Regulations

Both male and female must receive equal opportunity on accessing research resources and consultancy opportunities. The University Research and Innovation, Publication, Collaboration and Consultancy (RIPCC) Guidelines and Regulations identify gender-based violence and child sexual abuse as one of the priority research areas. It is expected that all other research projects and consultancies will be gendered.

Policy Statement

Mwanza University shall strive to mainstream gender in all research and consultancy activities. The University shall continue to give male and female staff equal opportunities for research and consultancy. The university shall encourage its staff to engender their research projects and consultancies.

6.4 Policy Status: Gender and Safeguarding Policy

A culture within which positive gender relations are anchored is a key for producing and moulding gender sensitive professionals (students, academic and administrative staff). The policy endeavours to promote proactive gender responsiveness in an attempt to modify the workplace culture and official complaint procedures in order to create working and learning space that is friendly for advancement production of knowledge at the University.

Safeguarding is a pertinent issue for inclusion in institutional policies and frameworks. Moreover, this policy addresses the implementation of a friendly environment that cultivates a safe working and learning space and reporting mechanisms in case of incidences of safeguarding.

Policy Statement and Implementation

a) The main stakeholders of this policy are the MzU community. The University shall continuously sensitize the staff members and students on gender and safeguarding issues and shall continue to promote and operationalize the policy against gender discrimination and any form of harassment or harm. The University shall raise awareness among staff and students on the existence of the gender and safeguarding

policy through different forums and distribution of the policy to new students and staff. The University shall encourage its staff and students to report all forms of discrimination, harassment, or harm so that such issues are addressed according to institutional and national legal procedures.

b) A University-wide GSU and DGSD shall be established, together they shall be guided by this policy. At the Department level, the gender desks shall receive and resolve all matters related to gender discrimination, and all forms of harassment. Matters that cannot be resolved at the Department level shall be sent to the GSU. All matters resolved at DGSD shall be recorded at the GSU. Gender and safeguarding desks and the GSU shall maintain confidentiality in counselling and resolving the matters reported.

c) The GSU shall not only serve as a counselling and dispute resolution unit but also it will be responsible for designing and coordinating gender and safeguarding related awareness raising programmes that cut across all the units of the University. For this matter, the GSU shall be under the office of VC.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE FOR THE POLICY

This Policy was approved by the University Council on 30th July 2021; and was effective from the date of its approval.

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