**Center for Gender Equity and Equality at University of Ruhuna (CGEEU)**

**Ruhuna University Policy Document**

1. **Background**

Sexual and gender- based violence in the Universities are reported in varying degrees in the Sri Lankan University System. (UGC; CARE & FUTA 2015). It is essentially important to address gender inequalities in Sri Lanka University system in order to consider them as centers of academic excellence. Therefore University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka has established a Standing Committee on Gender Equity/Equality to advice the UGC on gender issues in October 2015 and to address these unresolved concerns on gender issues. A Centre for Gender Equity/Equality (CGEE) at the UGC was also instituted to assist in promoting socially and gender – sensitive university sub – cultures and an environment of freedom and security that allows students and all university staff to pursue their study and work without discrimination and oppression.

*Gender equality* is the notion that men and women are similar; that they have common needs, interests, and priorities based on their humanity that should be treated equally via equal rights, freedoms, status, responsibilities, opportunities, access to resources and benefits, and control over them. Equality is understood to lead an absence of discrimination.

*Gender equality* recognizes the differences between men and women depending on their biological sex, their gendered life experiences as well as their social distinctions/ intersections. Consequently, men and women have to be treated *equitably* so as to ensure the fulfillment of these *differing* needs, interests and priorities. Equity is expected to provide for fairness and justice.

1. **Commitment of University of Ruhuna**

Ruhuna University strongly commit to promote of gender – sensitive university culture and university environment which allow students and university staff (academic/ administrative/ support) to pursue their work without oppression and discrimination.

1. **Policy Framework**

Ruhuna University policy facilitate to create a framework that will guide the university in integrating gender equity/ equality in all staff and student activities; to ensure conductive, gender – just working and learning environment to all its members and are recognized for their excellent practices.

The policy framework conceptualizes gender equity/equality. This means that both the similarities of men’s and women’s life experience as well as the differences in their life experiences are taken into account in conceptualization and discussion about gender. Ruhuna University works on the structure given below.

**Centre for Gender Equity and Equality**

**(Director)**

**University Gender**

**Equity/Equality Committee**

**Nominated by Senate**

**Chairperson**

**Faculty coordinator and**

**Gender Equity/Equality Cell**

* 1. **Scope of the Policy**

The policy establishes the basis for **Ruhuna University** cooperation with the UGC, the Government and society at large to promote equity/ equality between women and men.

This policy applies to all members of the university, including students, employees, visitors any individuals regularly or temporarily employed, studying, living, visiting, conducting business, or having any official capacity at the university.

This policy also applies to off- campus conduct that is likely to have a substantial adverse effect on any member of the university community or university.

* 1. **Policy Vision**

A university with gender- just working and learning environment to all its members and are recognized for their excellent practices, with zero tolerance towards SGBV

* 1. **Policy Mission**

To enable the university to excel in providing a gender sensitive organizational environment and to integrate gender into the functions of the university in order to attain gender equality/ equity to promote zero tolerance against SGBV

1. **Guiding Principles**

Policy will be based on the following principles:

* Principles of GEE shall be upheld
* Equal participation of male and female staff and students in the implementation of the policy shall be upheld
* Gender empowerment is central to the achievement of the goal and objectives of the policy
* Transparency, accountability, confidentiality and sensitivity in the implementation of the policy shall be upheld
* Partnership and collaboration between staff and students are essential to the realization of a conducive learning and working environment free from SGBV
* Principle of zero tolerance to SGBV shall upheld

1. **Specific objectives of the policy:**

* Develop gender- sensitive university culture and university environment by developing curricular and research
* Recognize gender education as a major part in the process of achieving gender equality/equity.
* Support the development of policy documents from a gender perspective and use of gender sensitive language at all levels of activity.
* Prevent cases of SGBV at **Ruhuna University**.
* To house and implement a mechanism of redress for sexual and gender- based violence in university.
* Promote harmonious relations between different categories of staff students at **Ruhuna University**
* Provide prompt, effective, and consistent and fair guidelines and disciplinary procedures, justice and reprieve for the aggrieved for handling cases of SGBV at the university
* Promote research and publications of research findings and recommendations in form of measures regarding SGBV

1. **Actions to be taken**

To achieve these specific objectives **Ruhuna University** shall:

* Develop and enforce policy guidelines on the use of gender inclusive language throughout the university
* Review and update all existing policies, forms, and procedures to eliminate sexist language and establish gender equality
* Develop and operationalize policy prohibiting public display of visual aids and materials that are demeaning to men and women
* Organize special gender awareness orientation programmes for new members of university bodies
* Conduct workshops on GEE and SGBV for all staff and students
* Create and support and advocacy group to advance issues of GEE and SGBC
* Publish the policy on GEE and SGBV and disseminate to all members of staff and students
* Require all staff and students to undertake to abide by the policy
* Undertake to regularly sensitize the university community on the polic
* Implement policy and regulations on sexual harassment
* Develop and enforce guidelines for ensure a secure environment that include street and security lightning; posting security at strategies points;, providing night surveillance services; availing hotlines for emergencies etc. particular attention be paid to halls of residence
* The university shall institute concrete mechanisms to address gender- based violence against students and staff
* Strengthen counseling services and allocate adequate resources for prevention, management, and rehabilitation of survivors of gender based violence at the university
* Create a framework for engendering the university curriculum
* Mainstream gender issues in the formal university curriculum
* Review and engender all existing curricula and ensure that new programmes are gender responsive
* Encourage staff and students to actively participate in co- curricular activities design and implement a mandatory cross cutting core course on gender and development for all first year undergraduate and postgraduate students
* Train all members of the community to facilitate the implementation process
* Institute empowerment programmes to protect all members of the university community against SGBV
* Strengthen the current guidance and counseling unit to deal effectively with cases of SGBV
* Facilitate university health providers to recognize and be responsive to the emotional and physiological needs of staff and students
* Design and carry out a gender-focused research skills training programme for staff members
* Develop guidelines to ensure that all research processes and innovations, irrespective of discipline, integrate gender analysis
* Design and implement an affirmative action programme to encourage participation of female members of staff, with specific budget allocations to support their multiple roles in society
* Expand dissemination outlets of international standards for gender focused research and publications
* Encourage increased operational research leading to evidence- based programming/ service delivery to handling of SGBV research agenda
* Facilitate the identification of SGBV research capacities/ needs and develop an SGBV research agenda
* Encourage research methodologies and approaches that are sensitive to survivors of SGBV and that lead to mechanisms of eradicating SGBV
* Design and implement programmes that ensure equal opportunities and affirmative action
* Design and implement a gender- responsive cross generational leadership and mentoring programme, particularly for young female staff in the science disciplines
* Establish and implement programmes with adequate facilities and resources to support the multiple roles of the university staff, particularly their career, studies and care- giving roles
* Develop and implement a gender sensitive and responsive human resources policy
* Develop a databank of qualifications, specialties, and experiences of women on the supreme university governing bodies, such as the university council, senate and other related bodies
* Develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy for financing the GEE objectives.
* Design guidelines and implement gender budgeting training programme for all key staff involved in university planning and budgeting processes
* Earmark budgetary resources, on the basis of a well- clarified percentage for funding gender mainstreaming processes in all the core functions of the university
* Establish a mechanism for financial accountability for resources allocated for gender mainstreaming
* Engender human resource policies
* Formulate and implement a gender- sensitive policy on disability including accessibility to the university buildings and facilities.
* Formulate and implement a policy on pregnant and parenting students and sensitise all relevant staff on sexual and reproductive rights of students
* Invest in child care facilities on university campus for the benefit of parenting staff.

* Seek approval for the positioning of the GEE Committee by Senate and council
* Establish the GEE committee with adequate space and staff
* Implement Resource mobilization strategy to enable the committee to access resources
* GEE committee will organize regular meetings once every two months to assess progress, monitor and evaluate the GEE Programme, consider implementation strategies

**7. Monitoring, evaluation and Accountability for GEE**

As the Governing Authority of **Ruhuna University**, the Council is responsible for ensuring that Ruhuna University fulfils its legal and financial responsibilities for promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination. In order to fulfil this council needs to receive an annual progress report on the monitoring and implementation of the policy to enable its members to ensure that the policy is being operationalized. The Council will further monitor progress on the implementation of the policy.

The council discharges its responsibility through the management structure of Ruhuna University.

**The Vice-Chancellor**

The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented and that staff are aware of their responsibilities, and that are adequately trained and held accountable for the implementation of the policy; and for ensuring that appropriate action is taken against staff or students who violate the policy

**Director Ruhuna University GEE Centre**

The director of the **Ruhuna University** GEE center is responsible for empowering the University and Faculty level GEE Cells by providing relevant information. And also empowering the university staff and students by providing necessary information, training and counseling service.

**Dean and Heads of Departments**

They are responsible for the implementation of the policy and strategic actions and procedures into practice; making sure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying out these; and take action against staff and students who discriminate on grounds of gender

1. **Institutional and Regulatory frameworks**

The implementation of the GEE policy requires a well-coordinated and guided institutional framework to translate goals, objectives and strategies into action programmes at all levels of the university functions. The implementation of the policy will therefore be operationalized through the existing University institutional such as senate and council on policy matters.

1. **Ruhuna University GEE advisory board**

There shall be a GEE advisory board of **Ruhuna University** reporting to the Vice-Chancellor with the following roles:

* Monitor the progress of training on gender equity and equality
* Monitor the progress of research, review policies and contribute policy inputs in the university level.
* Monitor the progress of the curricular reforms to include the concepts and practices of GEE
* To prevent and respond to SGBV by developing relevant skills
* Identifying ways and means of preventing SGBV in the university and empowering staff and students to prevent and respond to SGBV by developing relevant skills
* And enhance its capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the GEE policy at the institutional level.

**Composition**

* Vice-chancellor (Chairperson)
* Deputy Vice Chancellor
* Director Ruhuna University, GEE Centre (Co-Chair)
* Deans of Faculties
* Registrar
* Bursar
* Director/ Staff Development Centre
* Senior Student Counsellor
* Two academic representatives from each Faculty representing GEE Cell ( One male and one female )
* Two academic support representatives representing Administrative Academic Support GEE Cell (One male and one female )
* Two student representatives from each Faculty representing GEE Cell ( One male and one female )

1. **Faculty Level GEE Cells**

There shall be GEE Cells at the Faculty levels to achieve the objectives of the University Committee at Faculty Level

**Composition**

* Deans of Faculty (Chairperson)
* Two Academic representatives From each Department (one male and one female)
* Faculty Student representative from each Department one male and one female)

The objective is to appraise the steps taken and the success in the implementation of the policy.