



## **POLICY FOR GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY**

### **RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

**2019**

On the recommendation of the Senate, the Council of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, as the governing authority of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka by resolution adopts the following Policy.

Accepted Date:

Amended Date: 05.12.2019

Signature: Signed:

Position: Vice Chancellor, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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### 01. Introduction

Rajarata University of Sri Lanka as an educational institution plays a prominent role in the development of Sri Lanka by offering relevant and innovative academic programs to the students. Both the student and the staff work in an environment that has committed itself to excellence of utilization of the knowledge, skills and talents.

The Gender Equity and Equality (GEE) policy guides the institutionalization of policies and practices that promote gender equity which ensures that no student, academic or non-academic member faces discrimination or harassment on the basis of their gender. Gender based violence is a prominent social and public health issue worldwide, with substantial consequences for women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health (Williams et al., 2008, Owen et al., 2009). In Sri Lanka, Gender inequalities and violence including that of sexual and gender-based violence in the Universities have been reported as significant shortcomings in the Sri Lankan University System. (UGC; CARE & FUTA 2015). University Grants Commission (UGC) has recognized that without addressing these deep rooted inequalities and inequities within the system, Sri Lankan Universities cannot genuinely consider themselves to be centres of academic excellence. Therefore it is an essential requirement to develop policy frameworks to promote gender parity at all levels of employment in the Sri Lankan Universities, and to enhance gender mainstreaming in the University's research, teaching, capacity development, and dissemination activities.

## **02. Policy Framework**

The Rajarata University GEE policy addresses the goals and objectives of the Sri Lanka UGC Standing Committee on Gender Equity/Equality in Higher Education and the Sexual and Gender – Based Violence By Laws No 1 of 2017 of Rajarata University. The policy seeks to create a gender-sensitive university culture and university environment and promote equality and combat discrimination among the University's employees and students, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and age.

### **02.1 Scope of Policy**

The purpose of this GEE policy is to promote an equal and gender equal place to study and work, where all academic, non-academic employees and students are treated with respect, where no individual or group of people is excluded, and where discrimination and harassment are not tolerated.

### **02.2 Objectives**

- This GEE policy will be supportive for students' opportunities to benefit from their education, and their equal right to a positive study environment and this policy will influence on courses and study programs, and accessibility of premises, activities and information for all.
- This GEE policy will ensure that gender equity is integrated into institutional strategic planning, and that policy development, operational practices and procedures are all informed by equality of opportunity

- This GEE policy will ensure that the dignity and integrity of all academic members, non-academic members and students in the University community are equally respected and valued, regardless of status or occupation
- This GEE policy will advocate for a governance, administrative, teaching and research culture that is gender sensitive in all aspects of the university's operations, including admissions, employment and service delivery.
- This GEE policy will prevent discrimination and violence at work and in work-related activities.
- This GEE policy will ensure that all staff and students are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding gender based violence in the University.

### **02.3 Vision**

- A leading University that upholds gender equality, dignity, respect and fairness for all the academic, non-academic and students in the Sri Lankan University system.

### **02.4 Mission**

- To effectively and efficiently promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination of all the academic, non-academic members and students in the University.

## **03 Guiding Principles**

- The University shall promote gender mainstreaming in all its activities, including in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of its programs.
- The University shall strive to achieve gender equality in its operations and at all levels of employment and students.

## **04 Policy Resolutions**

### **04.1 Organizational Culture**

*The University shall promote and enforce a gender-responsive organisational culture in all University activities. For that the university will take following strategic actions to create a gender equalize culture.*

- i) Develop and enforce policy guidelines on the use of gender inclusive language throughout the University.
- ii) Develop and operationalize a policy prohibiting public display of visual aids and materials that are demeaning to all academic and non-academic employees and students.
- iii) Develop and enforce a gender-sensitive code of conduct for University staff and students.
- iv) Organize special gender awareness orientation programs for University staff and students.

#### **04.2 Safety Environment**

*The University will take following strategic actions to promote a gender friendly and inclusive secure environment at the university in order to ensure effective protection of bodily integrity and dignity of every member of the university community.*

- i) Implement policy and regulations on sexual harassment
- ii) Particular attention should be paid to halls of residence and private hostels,
- iii) Strengthen counselling services and allocate adequate resources for prevention, management and rehabilitation of survivors of gender-based violence at the University

#### **04.3 Research Innovation**

- i) Design and carry out a gender-focussed research skills training programme for academic staff and students.
- ii) Design and implement an affirmative action programme to encourage participation of members of staff, with specific budget allocations to support their academic activities related to gender based studies.
- iii) Encourage research methodologies and approaches that are sensitive to survivors of SGBV and lead to mechanisms for eradicating SGBV
- iv) Encourage and enhance the participation of males and females in conducting and publishing research in gender based issues.

#### **04.4 Introducing the curriculum and awareness programs**

*Rajarata University shall take all necessary steps to introduce new curriculum and awareness programs for all its academic programmes.*

- i) Conduct workshops on GEE and SGBV for all staff and students
- ii) Create and support an advocacy group to advance issues of GEE and SGBV
- iii) Design and implement a core course on Gender and Gender Based Violence for all first year undergraduates.
- iv) Ensure the use of gender responsive teaching and learning strategies to eliminate bias in language, attitudes and instructional processes, including in academic research.

#### **04.5 Student enrolment and performance**

- i) Provide student support services that enhance successful completion of their programmes.
- ii) Establish linkages with educational institutions and other stakeholders to increase enrolment and retention of disadvantaged female and male students.
- iii) Develop mechanisms for monitoring the performance and retention of students by gender.

#### **04.6 University GEE Cell**

The University shall designate gender cell an appropriate person(s) to address gender based violence issues within the University. This designee shall be the focal person for any staff or student who discloses that he or she is a victim or perpetrator of gender based violence. Further GEE Cell of Rajarata University reporting to the Vice-Chancellor with the following roles:

- All information relating to staff or student's involvement in a situation relating to gender based violence, to the extent possible, shall be kept confidential and shall not be made part of any staff or student's personnel file.
- Provide training on gender equity and equality (including social intersections) for the establishment of a core team of gender experts
- 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.

### **05. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **05.1 Rajarata University Council**

- The Council shall ensure the sustenance of a gender friendly environment by promoting gender equity and eliminating discrimination across all the academic, non-academic members and students at Rajarata University by formulating and enforcing such policies as may facilitate this.
- The Council shall receive and consider bi-annually, a progress report from the Vice chancellor on steps taken or being taken to provide a gender friendly environment in the University.

## **05.2 Rajarata University Senate**

- The Senate shall receive and consider periodically, comprehensive report from the GEE cell, on steps taken or being taken to provide a gender-friendly environment in order to promote gender equity in theUniversity

## **05.3 Rajarata University GEE Cell**

- Define and develop indicators, monitor, and assure accountability for implementation of the strategy in all Institutes, schools and departments;
- Identify, and disseminate information on good practice to measure the impact of integrating gender into policies;
- Ensure the existence of identifiable benchmarks directed at promoting equality of opportunity including impact assessment and publication of outcomes on gender enhancing programs.
- Ensure full implementation of the strategy, and forward quarterly, half yearly and yearly progress reports to the university council.

## **6. Approval and Amendments**

Date adapted:

Date Commenced:

Administrator: University Senate and Council

Date of Review:

Date Rescinded: Not Applicable