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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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1.0 Interpretation of Operational Terms of the Policy

(i) Affirmative Action

Is designed to help eliminate effects of past and present forms of discrimination. It is a process in which institutions identify areas of improvement, set goals, and take positive steps to enhance opportunities for marginalized groups, including women. In the context of this Policy it focuses on deliberate actions to provide equal opportunities in education, training, employment, and promoting qualified categories of people where they are underrepresented.

(ii) Discrimination

Occurs when a person or group of people are treated less favorably than another person or groups of people in comparable circumstances. Gender-based discrimination entails unfair and differential treatment meted out to persons based on their sex.

(iii)Gender:

MRU recognizes that gender as a concept is not static. For the purposes of this Policy, the term gender is used in the sense that society and culture apportion characteristics, requirements and expectations to males and females. Individual members of a society are assigned norms of behaviors, roles and duties on the basis of their sex. Biology bestows only a small portion of those attributes and roles; the greater part of what makes men and women are bestowed on them by culture and society

(iv) Gender Analysis

Is the process which examines the differences and disparities in the roles that women and men play, the power imbalances in their relations, their needs, constraints and opportunities and the impact of these differences in their lives. A gender analysis in MRU would examine how the differences between women and men determine differential access to benefits, opportunities and responsibilities in its functions. For gender mainstreaming to be effectively implemented, gender analysis must be done in all MRU's operations, including: teaching and learning, research, governance and administration, knowledge transfer partnerships, student and staff welfare, public space, and organizational culture.

(v) Gender Equality

In promoting gender equality, MRU is not denying the differences that exist between men and women. "Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal. In other words, gender equality is the absence of discrimination which is based on a person's sex, in opportunities, allocation of resources and benefits, human rights, and in access to services such as education.

(vii) Gender Equity

Gender equity goes beyond formal equality of the sexes and emphasizes substantive forms of justice which may entail treating men and women differently, when appropriate, in order to achieve outcomes that are fair and just. It requires fairness and justice in the distribution of responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and access to benefits between women and men. Gender equity embraces affirmative action where and when necessary and it is a step towards gender equality.

(viii) Gender Mainstreaming

In MRU, gender mainstreaming is the strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of its functions, so that women benefit equally, thus ensuring that gender inequality is not perpetuated. Gender mainstreaming does not simply entail inclusion of women in MRU's overall agenda already decided by men, but it involves a transformative process that requires changes in structures, procedures and cultures.

(ix) Gender Neutral/Blindness

A policy is said to be gender neutral/blind when it ignores or fails to take into account sex composition and/or gender characteristics and their effects on an activity.

(x) Gender Responsiveness

A gender-responsive policy incorporates basic principles for addressing the imbalances and inequalities that have resulted from socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women in a given society. It is in effect a blueprint or guideline for implementing action.

(xi) Sentinel Sites

Sentinel Sites in planning units are focal points that the Gender Mainstreaming Department (GMD) works closely with to mainstream gender in the planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation within those particular units. This Policy proposes that the Sentinel Sites be integrated into mainstream structures of MRU as Unit Gender Mainstreaming Committees.

(xii) Sex:

Sex refers to the biological differences/determinants between men and women which are universal and determined at birth. It is a useful analytical category that distinguishes biological differences between men and women from socially constructed differences.

(xiii) Sexual Harassment

Means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature; such conduct would constitute sexual harassment when: (a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly on a a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic achievement or advancement; or (b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened or insinuated to be used as the basis for decisions affecting the employment and/or the academic standing of an individual; or (c) Such

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conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive working or learning environment.

(xix) Women's Empowerment

Is used in the sense of giving women the tools or equipping them with knowledge, skills, and capacity to fully participate in decision-making and access to power. Empowerment presupposes full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society. It also denotes availing women with the opportunity to realize their full potential and capacities.

1.1 Background of MRU

Muteesa I Royal University (MRU) was offered an operational license by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2005 and started its operations in 2007. The founding Chancellor of the University, who is also its Visitor, is His Majesty the Kabaka, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II. The genesis of modern education in Uganda is historically associated with the Kingdom of Buganda owing to the role that Sekabaka Muteesa I played in inviting the missionaries who introduced education in Uganda. Owing to this history, it is only befitting that the University was named after this visionary leader. Hence, the University was named after the 31st King of Buganda who was a monarch of great vision, Kabaka Muteesa I (1856-1884). MRU is a skills training, academic and research-oriented institution of higher learning that was established as a private institution. The initiative was promoted by the Executive Committee (EC) of the Buganda Kingdom, headed by the *Katikkiro* (i.e., Prime Minister).

1.2 Strategic Goals of MRU

The Strategic Goals of MRU are as follows:

i) To produce graduates with all-round competencies and skills to be able to initiate self-employment activities or compete for jobs in the global market;
ii) To promote research and encourage students and staff to publish;
iii) To build and expand collaboration and engagement with the community, the alumni, and industry and business, and to equip students with practical skills while empowering the community, industry & business to develop local solutions;
iv) To strengthen MRU's human resource capacity;
v) To achieve a sustainable financial resource base;
vi) To improve the administrative and organizational arrangements of MRU with a view to achieving efficiency and effectiveness in all sections of MRU; and
vii) To construct or acquire, rehabilitate and maintain buildings, equipment, implements, ICT facilities and land particularly for the growth and development of its niche.

1.3 Vision of MRU

The Vision of MRU is to be "a leading university responding to contemporary challenges through teaching and learning, research and technical guidance".

1.4 Mission of MRU

The Mission of MRU is "to provide training, research and technical guidance responsive to national socio-economic needs".

1.5 Core Values of MRU

The core values of MRU are as follows:

i) Professionalism; Professionalism is a trait that's highly valued in the human resource of any organization. It has many attributes, including: (a) Specialized knowledge, (b) Competency, (c) Honesty and integrity, (d) Respect, (e) Accountability, (f) Self-regulation, and (g) Image;
ii) Respect for Diversity;
iii) Cultural Sensitivity;
iv) Tenacity; and
v) Team Spirit.

2.0 Introduction of the Policy

This Policy applies to all employees and other individuals working for MRU. It addresses discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and retaliation occurring among managers, supervisors, applicants, employees and third parties such as vendors, MRU's objective in maintaining the Policy and describes prohibited conduct in detail. The Policy includes examples of conduct that would be considered as its violation and consequences. Lastly, the Policy describes the complaint process and emphasizes the importance of confidentiality.

3.0 Objectives of the Policy

i. MRU is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, MRU expects that all relationships among persons in the office will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment;
ii. MRU has developed this policy document to ensure that all its employees can work in an environment free from unlawful harassment, discrimination and retaliation. MRU will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all concerned are familiar with this Policy and are aware that any complaint regarding its violation will be investigated and resolved appropriately;
iii. Any employee who has concerns about this Policy should talk with the Director of Human Resources;
iv. The Policy should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, or any other protected characteristic, from participating in business or work-related social activities or discussions. In other words, no one should make the mistake of engaging in discrimination or exclusion to avoid allegations of harassment; and
v. The law and the policies of MRU prohibit disparate treatment on the basis of sex, color or any other protected characteristic, with regard to terms, conditions, privileges and perquisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination and retaliation are intended to complement and further those policies, not to form the basis of an exception to them.

4.0 Application of the Policy

This Policy shall be applicable to all persons charged with the responsibility of managing MRU's equality and diversity in all their forms.

5.0 Equality and Diversity

i. Equal employment opportunity: MRU ensures equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law. MRU prohibits any such discrimination or harassment;

ii. Retaliation: MRU encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of MRU to promptly and thoroughly investigate such reports. MRU prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports;

iii. Sexual harassment: sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal in Uganda plus other local laws. For the purposes of this policy, "sexual harassment" is defined, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognizes two types of sexual harassment: a) quid pro quo and b) hostile work environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature;

iv. Harassment: harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by the law, or that of his or her relatives, friends or associates, and that:

   a) Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment;
   b) Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or, otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities; and
   c) Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual or group that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on

company time or using company equipment by e-mail, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites or other means.

v. Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation:
MRU encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe that they have been the victim of such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor, any member of the personnel practices committee, human resources or any ombudsman.

➢ Application of the Equality and Diversity Policy to Staff:

- Recruitment and Selection

a) Recruitment/advertising will encourage applications from all sectors of the community reflecting MRU's commitment to equality and diversity;
b) Recruitment/advertising will appear in publications appropriate to the audience capable of producing the best candidates (subject to budget considerations);
c) Job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment advertisements will be written on the basis of the essential and justifiable requirements of the position; and
d) Short-listing, appointment and rejection decisions will be transparent and justifiable and will be supported by written comments.

- Grading and Promotion

All grading and promotions criteria and procedures will be free from prejudice and must be applied equitably and consistently.

- Staff Development

All staff will have equal access to induction, personal and career development opportunities and facilities.

- Performance Management

Probation and appraisal procedures will be clear and transparent and will be applied fairly and transparently to all.

- Discipline and Grievance:

a) Disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all staff; and
b) Allegations of discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behavior will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures for staff.

- Application Policy for Students:

➢ Recruitment, Selection and Admission

a) All information contained in prospectuses, websites and other material used in the recruitment of students should promote equality of opportunity and make reference to this Policy; and
b) All staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of students will have an awareness of equality and diversity.

➢ Assessment

There will be clear, consistent and transparent criteria for student assessments and all assessments will take place on an equal opportunities basis.

- Career Planning and Participation

All students will have access to career planning support and will be encouraged to participate fully in the academic, cultural and social life of MRU.

- Discipline and Student Complaints

a) Discipline and student complaints procedures will be applied fairly and transparently to all students; and
b) Allegations of harassment or discrimination will be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Code.

6.0 Detailed Regulation on Sexual Harassment Prevention

i. Preliminary

Interpretation: in these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

a) "Complainant" means a person who complains that she/he has been sexually harassed;
b) "Frivolous" means that the complaint has no reasonable basis in law or fact;
c) "Hostile environment" means unwelcome sexual conduct that is sufficiently severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of education or employment and creates an environment that a reasonable person would find intimidating, hostile or offensive;
d) "Member of Staff" means an employee of MRU duly appointed by MRU authorities;
e) "Respondent" refers to a person against whom a sexual harassment complaint has been lodged;
f) "Senate Committee" means the MRU Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee (MRUSHC);
g) "Sexual assault" means non-consensual and/or abusive sexual conduct;
h) "Sexual body parts" include, but are not limited to, areas around the genitals, breasts and buttocks;
i) "Student" refers to a student who has been duly admitted to MRU;
j) "Unit Committee" means the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee at the Campus, Faculty, School, Institute or Administrative Department;
k) "University" means Muteesa I Royal University; and
l) "Visiting Staff" are included under the University staff.

- Sexual harassment may comprise a single act or a continuous act(s) or omission

Application: Sexual harassment is prohibited for both on-campus and off-campus University settings between and among:

(a) Students;
(b) Academic Staff;
(c) Administrative Staff;
(d) Support Staff;
(e) Students and Staff Members;
(f) Staff Members of various categories;
(g) Forms of Sexual Harassment; and
(h) A conduct amounts to sexual harassment when:

i. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition for employment or academic achievement or advancement;
ii. Submission to, or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened, or insinuated to be used as the basis for an individual's employment, or academic achievement, or enhancement; and
iii. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or academic performance or creating an intimidating, exploiting, hostile, offensive working or academic environment

- Examples of Sexual Harassment: these include, but are not limited to:

(a) Unwanted physical contact of intimate body parts such as; patting buttocks or stroking breasts,
(b) Massaging any part, scratching the palm or deliberate brushing against the body;
(c) Unwanted and persistent explicit or implicit propositions to engage in sexual activity such as, sending sexually explicit telephone messages, e-mail messages, letters or notes;
(d) Exposure of sexual body parts;
(e) Unwanted demands for sex in exchange for employment or academic favors, such as threats of employment termination if a subordinate refuses the supervisor's sexual advances or promise of higher grade on submission to sexual advances;
(f) Unwanted verbal communication, sexual epithets, jokes, written references to sexual conduct, sexual gossip, deficiencies or prowëss; and
(g) Unwanted non-verbal conduct such as facial expressions, suggestive finger and other body gestures;
and sexual assault.

- Prohibition of Retaliation:

(a) A student or member of staff shall not retaliate against or victimize a person who complains of sexual harassment;
(b) A student or member of staff shall not retaliate against or victimize a witness who provides evidence of sexual harassment;
(c) A respondent who retaliates or victimizes a complainant of sexual harassment commits a disciplinary offence, and shall on conviction, be subjected to disciplinary action and the

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disciplinary action shall reach out all the agents, colleagues and accomplices of the person respondent.

ii. Academic Freedom

These regulations shall not limit *bona fide* freedom of expression and exercise of academic freedom through different teaching methods.

iii. Frivolous or False Accusations

(a) A student or member of staff who makes a frivolous, malicious and vexatious or false accusation of sexual harassment against another person commits a disciplinary offence; and
(b) A person convicted of disciplinary offence under this regulation shall be liable to any or a combination of the following:

i. Written warning;
ii. Ordered to give a public apology to the aggrieved party;
iii. Ordered to compensate the aggrieved party;
iv. Suspension;
v. Dismissal;
vi. Demotion; and
vii. Transfer

iv. Confidentiality

(a) When a person in authority receives a complaint of sexual harassment, that person shall as far as practical, treat the complaint with utmost confidentiality;
(b) Where it is necessary to interview a witness, the Committee shall maintain strict confidentiality;
(c) Any person handling a case of sexual harassment and any party to the case shall treat it with confidentiality except where disclosure is necessary to prevent imminent harm; and
(d) Any Committee member who fails or neglects to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to a complaint of sexual harassment commits an offence and is liable to be penalized. Anonymous complaints are not permissible

v. Enforcement Principles

➢ Enforcement and implementation of this Policy shall be based on the following principles:

a. Any complaint lodged under this Policy will be treated with diligence, fairness, justice and due process, following the guidelines attached hereto;
b. MRU's Legal Officer shall serve as resource person with regard to the interpretation of the guidelines;
c. All complaints of sexual harassment will be treated with confidentiality to the extent practical. Only those individuals necessarily involved in the investigatory process and the decision regarding resolution of the complaint should ordinarily be provided access to information regarding any allegation of sexual harassment;
d. Anonymous complaints are not permissible;

e. In any investigation of sexual harassment allegations, the accused must promptly be made aware of the complaint and of the identity of the complainant(s);
f. Investigations must be conducted promptly and thoroughly;
g. Determination of whether a conduct amounts to sexual harassment shall be on a case-by-case basis and determination of whether an environment is "hostile" must be based on all of the circumstances. These circumstances could include the frequency of the conduct, its severity, and whether it is threatening or humiliating;
h. Both the complainant and the respondent must be notified of the outcome of the investigation; and
i. If the respondent is found guilty of sexual harassment, the punishment shall be executed through the appropriate channels of MRU.

vi. Objectives

- The objectives of this Policy are three-fold:

a. To sensitize the MRU community about the evils of sexual harassment, thereby engendering a sense of social responsibility and zero tolerance for such behavior;
b. To establish an institutional framework that encourages victims of sexual harassment to exercise their rights, maintain their dignity and refuse to submit to the pressures of sexual harassment; and
c. To take action in eliminating sexual harassment at MRU and impose corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

vii. Strategies

- MRU shall achieve its objectives through the following strategies:

(a) Adopting and implementing the Policy and Guidelines to Sexual Harassment Prevention;
(b) Establishing Anti-Sexual Harassment Committees to handle complaints of sexual harassment;
(c) Launching sensitization programmes and advocacy for education about sexual harassment for students and staff at all levels of MRU;
(d) Equipping members of MRU community with skills and tools to defend themselves against sexual harassment;
(e) Integrating sexual harassment into the curriculum of the compulsory course unit on ethics for all students;
(f) Establishing a gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation framework for the prevention of sexual harassment;
(g) Promoting action-based research that highlights the root causes and complexities of sexual harassment and developing a culture that is responsive to diversities; and
(h) Setting up a sexual harassment hotline for reporting emergency cases of sexual assaults.

viii. Sexual Harassment and Academic Freedom:

(a) This policy is intended to combat genuine sexual abuse and harassment and shall not limit academic freedom or the principles of free inquiry and expression. The Policy is not intended to restrict teaching methods, freedom of expression, or social contact nor will it be permitted to do so; and
(b) Sexual harassment, however, is neither legally protected expression, nor the proper exercise of academic freedom. On the contrary, sexual harassment compromises MRU's integrity, as

well as its tradition of intellectual freedom. Therefore, the exercise of the right to academic freedom is subject to protection from conduct that constitutes sexual harassment.

ix. Implementing Organs

a) A Senate Committee known as the MRU Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee (MRU-ASHC) is the body, with appellant jurisdiction, charged with the duty and authority to ensure full implementation of this Policy; and
b) Each Campus/Faculty/School/Institute and administrative Unit shall appoint a Unit Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee to deal with complaints at the local levels.

7.0 Procedural Matters

- Anti-Sexual Harassment Committees

MRU shall set up Anti-Sexual Harassment Committees at two levels:

a) At every Campus. This will be referred to as the Unit Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee;
b) At the level of Senate and it shall be referred to as the MRU Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee (MRU-ASHC); and
c) Each Committee shall be composed of persons of high integrity of whom at least 50% must be women.

- Unit Committees

i. The composition of the Unit Committee shall comprise a pool of ten persons as follows:

(a) The Administrative Head of the Unit;
(b) One senior member of academic/administrative staff ;
(c) One junior member of academic/administrative staff;
(d) One member of the support staff; and
(e) One student representative.

ii. The administrative head of the unit shall be the chairperson of the Unit Committee;
iii. The Unit Management Boards shall select the Deputy Chairperson and other members of the Unit Committee;
iv. An *ad hoc* of about five-persons, investigating team representing each membership category shall be selected by the Chairperson of the Unit Committee from the pool to deal with each arising case;
v. Where the Chairperson of the Unit Committee is the subject of a complaint, the Deputy Chairperson shall be responsible to select the ad hoc investigating team; and
vi. The decision of the Unit Committee shall be subject to appeal to MRU-ASHC.

- Senate Committee

i. MRU-ASHC has appellant jurisdiction over decisions made by Unit Committees;
ii. The composition of the Senate Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee (MRU-ASHC) shall comprise a pool of twenty persons as follows:

(a) The Vice-Chancellor;

(b) The Chairperson of the University Disciplinary Committee;
(c) One representative from each Faculty;
(d) Dean of Students;
(e) University Legal Officer;
(f) University Counselor;
(g) Two student representatives;
(h) Two representatives of Administrative staff; and
(i) Two representatives of Support Staff

iii. The Vice-Chancellor shall be the Chairperson of MRU-ASHC;
iv. Senate shall select members of MRU-ASHC from its membership with powers to co-opt non-members.
v. An ad hoc of about five-persons of;
vi. the investigating team shall be selected by the Chairperson of MRU-ASHC from the pool to deal with each arising case; and
vii. Where the Chairperson of MRU-ASHC is the subject of a complaint, the Deputy Chairperson shall be responsible to select the *ad hoc* investigating team.

- Forms of Complaint

➢ There are two options that a victim of sexual harassment may wish to pursue, informal and formal complaints:

a. Informal Complaint:

i. An informal complaint is made to any academic staff, administrative staff or students' leader. It is made in those cases where the victim wishes for something to be done (e.g., warn the harasser or transfer him/her to another Department or change his/her dissertation supervisor) but is not ready to lodge a formal complaint. In any case, the respondent must be notified of the complaint lodged against him/her;
ii. An informal complaint lodged with a student leader, academic or administrative staff shall be forwarded to the Unit Committee for recording;
iii. An informal complaint remains on record and may be used in future as evidence of repeated unwanted conduct should the need arise;
iv. Any member of MRU community who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment can lodge a written and signed complaint to the chairperson or any other member of the Unit Committee;
v. No student or employee shall ever be required to report or make a complaint of sexual harassment to the person who is the subject of the complaint;
vi. The Unit Committee will then deal with the complaint through its *ad hoc* investigating sub-committee; and
vii. The Unit may also initiate an official investigation of a complaint in situations it deems require formal resolution.

b. Formal Complaint

➢ A formal complaint shall contain:

i. Name and address of the complainant;

ii. Date of the complaint;
iii. Nature and details of the act or conduct complained; and
iv. Any other relevant matter concerning the complaint of sexual harassment

- Guidelines for Documenting Sexual Harassment

(a) It is important to document sexual harassment. Hence, it is vital that an account of the incident(s) complained about must be documented as soon as possible after its occurrence, especially in cases of formal complaints;
(b) The written account should include the following:

a) Date;
b) Time and place of each incident;
c) The conduct and words involved in the incident;
d) The victim's response; and
e) The names of any witnesses.

(c) The victim may confront the individual whose conduct is offensive, unwelcome or intimidating and request that such conduct should stop. The request must be direct and consistent.

- Investigations

a) The Unit Committee shall carry out investigations of a complaint of sexual harassment with independence, objectively and with due diligence and respect for rights of both the complainant and the respondent;
b) A member of any Committee investigating the alleged sexual harassment shall not be connected with the allegation in any way. He/she should be excluded from the process;
c) A complaint should be lodged within a reasonable time;
d) A complaint shall be investigated and disposed of within three months after the lodging of the complaint, except in special circumstances.

- Accompaniment: A friend or colleague may accompany a complainant or the respondent to the hearing.

a. Protection of Personal Dignity:

The complainant or respondent shall not be allowed to unnecessarily and repeatedly recount the events complained of, as recounting the experience of sexual harassment is difficult and can damage the party's personal dignity; and

b. Service on Alleged Harasser:

The relevant Committee shall summon the respondent who shall respond in writing within fourteen days from the date of service, except in special circumstances.

➢ Failure to Respond to Summons

A Respondent that has been summoned and fails to lodge a written response within the prescribed period commits an offence and is liable to be penalized.

- Rules of Procedure

The relevant Committees shall follow these policy regulations and abide by rules of natural justice.

- Monitoring

The Chairperson of MRU Council shall put in place mechanisms to monitor complaints that have been upheld for purposes of ensuring that the harassment has stopped.

- Penalties

i. A person found guilty of sexual harassment shall, depending on the gravity of the offence, be liable to any or a combination of the following:

a) Written warning;
b) Ordered to give a public apology to the aggrieved party;
c) Ordered to compensate the aggrieved party;
d) Suspension;
e) Dismissal;
f) Demotion; and
g) Transfer

ii. A convicted person may be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary provisions of MRU Standing Orders; and

iii. The penalties given by the relevant Committee on Sexual Harassment shall not preclude the victim from seeking remedy/remedies provided by the national judicial framework.

v. Appeals

a) A person aggrieved by the decision of the Unit Committee may, within fourteen days of the decision, appeal against the decision to MRU-ASHC; and
b) MRU-ASHC shall dispose of all appeal cases within three months of lodging the appeal except in special circumstances.

8.0 Detailed HIV/AIDS Policy

The following policy covers HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Disease Syndrome).

- Preamble

Anecdotal reports suggest that the HIV/AIDS epidemic has had major effects on tertiary education institutions especially in African countries south of the Sahara desert. The institutions are also challenged by the impact of the epidemic at country, regional and global level. MRU, like many

universities elsewhere, has a very high concentration of young people who are a very valuable national resource and yet are extremely vulnerable to HIV/AIDS acquisition. MRU also has a very high concentration of well trained personnel that the country can ill-afford to lose through ill health and premature death. Therefore, the need of an HIV/AIDS policy for an institution like MRU cannot be over-emphasized in guiding and streamlining HIV/AIDS related issues.

- Principles for Understanding HIV/AIDS

➢ Non-discrimination

MRU recognizes that there is no documented evidence that the HIV/AIDS is spread through ordinary contact between persons and, therefore, concern or fear of its transmission from one person to another through ordinary contact is not a reason to exclude persons who are carriers of the HIV or have AIDS from campus and academic or social activities.

➢ Standard Procedures

The fact that there is no current evidence that HIV infection can be transmitted by casual contact suggests that the standard procedures concerning protection of students, staff and researchers in MRU laboratories, instruction in classrooms, sanitation standards in student housing and in food service operations, and medical practice in MRU's Health Services adequately addresses the majority of concerns that may occur.

➢ Rule of Exceptions

If situations arise in which existing policies and procedures do not apply or in which it is necessary to make a case-by-case decision, the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Human Resources Manager and Dean of Students shall consult with the Director of MRU Health Services, MRU Legal Officer, and any other relevant staff member/party to review the matter and provide a recommendation of action.

➢ Gender Mainstreaming

MRU recognizes the centrality of gender issues in the fight against HIV/AIDS and will mainstream gender considerations in all aspects of this Policy.

- Policies Pertaining to Students

MRU policies involving students shall include:

➢ Admissions

Consideration of the existence of HIV infection shall not be part of the admission criteria for prospective students.

➢ Medical Examination for Students

a) There will be no requirement for new students to undertake mandatory HIV related medical examination except on clinical grounds and as determined by a health care provider. However, under general MRU dispensation, new students will be required to undertake basic and routine medical examination when they report to MRU; and
b) Continuing students may undergo HIV related medical examination on clinical grounds and as determined by a health care provider.

➢ Access to Facilities

Students with HIV infection shall have full access to educational facilities, student assemblies, residential halls, dining areas, swimming pools, restaurants, rest rooms, recreation, entertainment or other common areas.

➢ Attendance

a) Students with HIV infection shall be allowed normal classroom attendance, or other student employment opportunities, and participation in co-curricular activities (e.g., social, cultural, and athletic events) without restriction as long as they are physically and mentally able;
b) If the programme load of a student with HIV infection must be modified or reduced for medical reasons, existing guidelines pertaining to reduced course loads shall be followed; and
c) Students, who experience anxiety about the risk of infection and refuse to attend class or other functions because of the presence of a fellow student or an instructor who is HIV-infected, or perceived to be infected, shall receive counseling as to current medical information related to the risk of exposure to HIV infection through routine contact.

➢ Education

Through Student Health Services and academic units, educational programs about HIV infection will be provided to students on an ongoing basis. Current information in the form of programs pamphlets, audiovisual aids, etc, will be made easily accessible to the student population.

➢ Financial or Other Aid

MRU policies relating to financial or any other aid apply equally to all its students irrespective of their HIV status.

➢ Food Services

a) Students with HIV infection shall have full access to all residence dining halls, rented housing dining rooms, private contracted food facilities, fraternity and sorority dining rooms, and MRU's regulated cash operated restaurants, outlets, stores, and catered events without restriction; and
b) Students may however only be excluded on the basis of not holding membership in the applicable organization or being active participants in the sponsoring organization.

➢ Non-discrimination

a) Discrimination based on the actual or assumed disabling effects of HIV infection is prohibited. MRU condemns all occurrences of emotional and/or physical abuse as intolerable and will respond to them quickly and effectively; and
b) Exclusion may be acceptable if the HIV infected student is a risk to others in pursuance of a particular activity, e.g., a medical practitioner could pause a risk to his/her patients while performing invasive procedures.

➢ Disabling Condition

Students with HIV/AIDS may be considered as having disabling conditions. Students with HIV/AIDS seeking assistance shall receive appropriate assistance.

➢ University Approved/Regulated Housing

a) In an effort to serve the needs of HIV-infected students, decisions about housing for students with HIV infection will be made on a case-by-case basis;
b) There may be, in some circumstances, reasonable concern for the health of students with immune deficiencies when those students might be exposed to certain contagious diseases (e.g., to measles or chicken pox) in a close living situation; and
c) MRU administrators and health officers may recommend/require that a student with HIV infection seek special housing arrangements for safety precautions.

➢ Safety Precautions

a) MRU will take the necessary steps to insure the safety of individuals who may be at risk of exposure to body fluids, blood or blood products; and
b) In order to prevent student exposure to HIV during electives, internships or other curricular activities at collaborating/partnering institutions, MRU will liaise with collaborating institutions in assurance of safety of students within the limits of those institutions existing framework.

➢ Off-campus Study Programs

Students participating in off-campus study programs shall be informed of health risks particularly in regard to the blood supply and medical practice or other related care and support activities that may increase their risk of exposure to HIV. Students who have to travel abroad shall also be informed of HIV test requirements to obtain visas to visit certain countries.

➢ HIV Testing

a) There is no current justification for mandatory HIV diagnostic testing, and MRU will not require it for participation in any activity. However, when other institutions, agencies, or governments require testing for participation, enrollment, or travel, diagnostic testing will be made available by MRU Health Services or a referral center; and

b) There is no current medical justification for mandatory HIV diagnostic testing for enrollment to study at MRU. No individual may be tested for presence of HIV without the informed written consent of that individual except if mentally incapacitated.

- Policies Pertaining to MRU Employees

MRU is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe work environment for all employees, as well as providing support for individual employees who may face HIV related illnesses. Unless stated otherwise, the following policies apply to MRU employees.

➢ Work Place Safety

MRU is desirous to provide and to have a safe work environment for all employees.

➢ Employment

MRU accepts otherwise qualified individuals presenting themselves for employment, irrespective of their HIV status. Although a medical examination will be required of all new employees prior to assumption of duties such shall not include HIV testing.

➢ Employment of Affected Persons

MRU will not refuse to hire or promote, and will not ban or discharge an employee from employment or otherwise discriminate against any individual because that person is HIV-infected, or perceived to be infected, so long as the individual can, with reasonable accommodation, perform the duties of his/her position or unless the individual posses a significant risk of substantial harm to other individuals or employees or the public, that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable precautions. Further, MRU will not subject an employee that is so infected to the job conditions, discipline, standards of performance, or other requirements which differ from those applied to applicants or employees not so infected, except as a means of accommodation for a disabling condition which may exist.

➢ Employee Refusal to Work

a) Employees who experience anxiety about the risk of infection and who refuse to work with a co-worker, student, or member of the public who is HIV-infected, or perceived to be infected, shall receive counseling as to the current medical information related to the risk of exposure to HIV infection through routine contact in the work place; and
b) Continued unreasonable refusal to work with an HIV-infected person could make an employee subject to disciplinary sanctions consistent with applicable provisions of Uganda laws and regulations, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and applicable to MRU/administrative rules.

➢ HIV Testing

a) There is no current justification for mandatory HIV diagnostic testing, and MRU will not require it for participation in any activity. However, when other institutions, agencies, or

governments require testing for participation, enrollment, or travel, diagnostic testing will be made available by MRU Health Services or a referral center; and

b) There is no current medical justification for mandatory HIV diagnostic testing for employment at MRU. No individual may be tested for presence of HIV without the informed written consent of that individual except if mentally incapacitated.

➢ Employee benefits

With regard to employee benefits programs, MRU will treat HIV-related illnesses the same as other life-threatening illnesses.

- Policies Pertaining to HIV Prevention

a) Although Uganda has made significant progress in the prevention of HIV/AIDS, she is still vulnerable to the persistent epidemic. There is need for aggressive policies and programmes that promote prevention efforts. MRU will persistently pursue pro-active prevention efforts that are in-line with the overall national policies and guidelines. These will include but are not limited to provision of HIV prevention information, education and communication (IEC), promotion of the ABC strategy, emphasizing abstinence, safe sex and use of condoms, and avoiding unsteady partnerships. In addition, infrastructure for easy access to HIV testing and counseling services within MRU will be enhanced and maintained coupled with promotion of students and staff HIV/AIDS prevention clubs;

b) Programs that lead to prevention of parental transmission of HIV, for example, through safe transfusions, use of safe syringes and needles, avoiding use and abuse of intravenous drugs will be established. Other approaches to HIV prevention like prevention of mother to child transmission and treatment of those infected by use of anti-retroviral will be promoted; and

c) Other policies which are beneficial to promoting HIV/AIDS prevention like gender mainstreaming policy, sexual harassment policy and any other that may be considered appropriate will be developed or strengthened and enforced. The above measures are intended to create a safe environment that is conducive for prevention of acquisition and transmission of HIV.

- Policies Pertaining to Health Services

Medical information and public health policy regarding HIV/AIDS are rapidly evolving. The policies of MRU Health Services are to keep abreast of all relevant information about the epidemic and put it to maximum use for the benefit of students and staff, within the limits that resources allow. This will be accomplished by:

➢ Safe Medical Practices

MRU Health Services seek to ensure that no person contracts infectious diseases during medical procedures. Stringent universal precautions for the prevention of HIV and related infections through infected body fluid or instruments contaminated by such fluid shall be maintained. These procedures will be under continuous review by the health staff.

➢ Management of Exposure to HIV Infection

Post-exposure prophylaxis for those who get accidentally exposed to the virus, for example, through needle stick injuries or rape will be provided by MRU through its MRU Health Services or appropriate referral services.

- Counseling and Other Appropriate Services

a) Counseling of the students shall be coordinated by MRU Health System and other appropriate designated services; and
b) Counseling about safe sex practices, needle precautions, and prenatal transmission is provided by MRU's Health and Counseling Services. MRU's staff should be available, as much as possible, at campus lectures, talks at living or other campus groups, through the campus media and for campus outreach programs such as HIV/AIDS prevention programs.

- HIV Testing Services

a) Confidential, inexpensive diagnostic testing for HIV will be offered to students by MUR Health Services; and
b) Priority is given to persons with a-significant risk, by history, of having been infected by HIV. No tests will be given without informed consent, and results cannot be released to third parties without the specific and express prior authorization of the patient unless otherwise required by law.

- Provision for HIV Care

a) As with all other illnesses, the goal of MRU Health Services will be to assist the HIV infected persons to remain active and be able to perform as normally as possible; and
b) Continuing education, treatment, and emotional support to students and staff found to be infected with HIV will be provided. Information that may preserve the health of the patient and prevent transmission of the disease will be provided to the patient and follow up will be encouraged. MRU Health Services staff will participate up to its capacity, with appropriate referrals to specialists or other centers in the care of those students and staff who become ill with HIV/AIDS.

- Confidentiality

a) Confidentiality of medical conditions shall be maintained. MRU's students' and employees' medical records hold confidential information and, as such, may not be released without the individual's written permission except as otherwise provided by law;
b) There is no medical necessity to advise students, Faculty, or other staff of the presence of students who have HIV infection; and
c) MRU encourages its employees and students with serious infectious illnesses such as HIV infection to inform their Department Heads or administrators so that reasonable accommodation to their conditions can be planned and implemented. Such self-disclosure is entirely voluntary, and the information disclosed may not be released without written authorization unless otherwise required by law.

- Referral

MRU will partner with institutions, programs and projects that will provide care to those who are infected.

- Policies Pertaining to MRU Responsibilities

➢ Care

a) MRU will make the best efforts within the limits of available resources and existing MRU health care regulations to provide staff and students affected with HIV/AIDS with the necessary care and refer HIV/AIDS infected staff, their families and students to suitable treatment sites as appropriate, where additional treatment is required, which is not provided by MRU; and
b) MRU shall offer appropriate counseling and basic health care and maintenance to all staff members and students who are on the different MRU campuses. The level of care offered by MRU shall be determined by budgetary considerations, and the reality of the sustainability of such care interventions. MRU will pursue initiatives to demonstrate the highest possible standard of care.

➢ Research

a) MRU is committed to undertaking extensive empirical and operational public health, biomedical and social science research on HIV/AIDS;
b) Policies, plans and guidelines will be developed which support and promote co-ordination of HIV/AIDS research underway while creating mechanisms, which encourage more research to be undertaken by staff and students at MRU; and
c) Efforts to develop and sustain meaningful collaborations and partnerships with communities, other institutions and public and private sector will be encouraged and nurtured.

➢ Education and Outreach

a) MRU shall actively support instructions that mainstream HIV/AIDS education in its curricula, services and activities;
b) MRU shall support the distribution of training materials and make available training sessions and knowledgeable speakers; and
c) Recognizing the regular turnover of students and employees, MRU will offer programs and conduct mailings at regular intervals.

➢ Leadership

MRU will play a leadership role in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic and mitigating its impact on itself and the wider society in Uganda in controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Leadership skills will be developed in areas related to prevention, care and treatment, legal and human rights aspects and other areas relevant to the epidemic.

➢ Community Involvement/Advocacy

a) MRU recognizes that the struggle against HIV/AIDS is not restricted itscampuses and employees or students, but that wider community involvement and participation is required to control the spread of the disease and mitigate its impact;
b) MRU, a leading institution in the community, must accordingly establish community partnerships and outreach programmes for creating HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention; and
c) MRU will also coordinate its efforts with NGOs, tertiary education institutions, community organizations and the public and private sector.

- Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

➢ Implementation

a) The Vice-Chancellor shall designate an office(s) that will coordinate the implementation of this Policy; and
b) MRU will raise financial resources on an ongoing basis so as to support the implementation of this Policy through grants, donations and internally generated funds.

➢ Monitoring and Evaluation

a) There is need for MRU to put in place a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system so as to assess the trends in its performance in different aspects relevant to this policy, e.g., impact of HIV on students and staff;
b) Progress in MRU's HIV prevention, care and treatment programs;
c) HIV/AIDS curricular activities;
d) HIV/AIDS research;
e) HIV/AIDS related outreach programmes; and
f) Funding related to HIV/AIDS programmes and activities

9 Gender Equity

i. Introduction

MRU is committed to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment where all students, academic, administrative and support staff, female and male, enjoy equal opportunities, human rights and non-discrimination in all spheres of MRU's life. This commitment is demonstrated by institutionalization of affirmative action in MRU's admission processes. The need for the policy is critical to the continued growth and strategic integration of the gender mainstreaming perspective in MRU functions. There are marked gender gaps in all the major areas of the core functions of MRU as noted below:

a) Policy Formulation:
General MRU policy formulation is still gender blind. Apart from the Anti Sexual Harassment Policy, other policies of MRU do not incorporate clear principles of gender equality and equity;
b) Women's Participation in Decision-Making:

Gender gaps persist in all decision-making organs of MRU and at all levels of governance. This Policy provides the framework to guide the gender mainstreaming process; the regulations for the integration and enforcement; as well as the actors-to track the progress of the implementation and ensure compliance. The MRU Gender Equality Policy (MRUGEP) shall be the vital tool for the integration of gender into unit and management structures, programmes and functions; and

c) Mainstreaming Gender in Planning Units:
Planning Units have largely not embraced gender mainstreaming in their planning, budgeting and implementation processes. The gender committees in planning units have been invisible and ineffective in mainstreaming gender within the respective planning units. This Policy is to empower planning units to mainstream gender in plans, budgets and M&E tools for greater impact towards gender equality and mutual accountability.

ii. Rationale

This Gender Equality Policy is a statement of MRU's commitment to taking positive steps in gender planning for the institution's sustenance, the promotion of gender justices, the management and prevention of gender violence, discrimination and injustice. This Policy commits MRU to making human and financial capacity and resources available to support the quest for gender justice:

iii. A Blueprint for Gender-Responsiveness

This Gender Equality Policy signals the position of MRU on gender issues as part of its vision, mission and core business. The policy prepares MRU and provides guidelines for adjudicating and responding to gender issues as they arise in the institution, the community and society at large. The policy signals MRU's commitment to taking positive steps in gender planning for the institution's sustenance, the promotion of gender justice, the management and prevention of gender violence, discrimination and injustice. The Policy commits MRU to making human and financial capacity and resources available to support the quest for gender justice.

iv. A Human Rights

The attainment of equity and gender equality is regarded as absolutely essential from a human rights perspective. MRU is required to take into account the rights of all its members, irrespective of gender. A Gender Equality Policy will confirm and institutionalize the rights, responsibilities and duties of all stakeholders in MRU.

v. A Prerequisite for Sustainable Development

It is now a well-established fact that gender equality is central to sustainable development where every member of society is treated with respect and dignity, affording them equal opportunity to realize their full potential. Education is an empowering force to support sustainable development and, therefore, MRU has a crucial role to play in contributing to the broader societal goal of gender equality. This can only be achieved by MRU investing in eliminating all the social and structural impediments that stand in the way of women's full participation in higher education.

vi. A Benchmark for Institutional Advancement

Gender equality has become one of the most important areas by which the quality and effectiveness of an academic institution is judged. A Gender Equality Policy provides an institutional framework within which actions on gender can be taken at all levels. It further provides a framework that enables MRU and all its stakeholders to undertake initiatives that are mutually beneficial and lead to the promotion of gender justice and equity. An effective Gender Equality Policy is supported by detailed rules and regulations to guide MRU towards more effective equity and equality strategies.

vii. Key to Problem-Solving

The integration of gender in programme planning and implementation is seen as integral to solving many institutional and societal problems. For example, tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic has remained a big challenge in Uganda because of not paying serious attention to the gender dimensions underlying the scourge. Gender mainstreaming in development interventions, especially in research and innovations, ensures that poverty is addressed with a gender perspective for the benefit of males and females in society.

viii. The Overarching Policy Statement

Achieving gender equality and non-discrimination for all staff and students is a strategic objective of MRU. MRU explicitly plans to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue into both its core and support functions. In realizing gender equality, MRU shall endeavor to do everything within its means not to overlook the diversities among and between members of MRU community, particularly disability, social class and age. Achieving gender equality and equity at MRU is a long-term process. MRU is committed to working with all stakeholders within and outside it, guided by the strategic actions outlined herein.

ix. Guiding Principles

In line with the National Gender Policy Principles which emphasize gender equality and equity, affirmative action, gender as a crosscutting issue in all sectors and levels and the need to take into consideration the impact of household and family relations on gender equality, the guiding principles for MRU's Gender Equality Policy are:

a. Women and men in MRU are not a homogenous group; therefore, the inter- and intra-sex differences must be taken into account to achieve substantive equality and equity;
b. Gender equality means that the different behavior, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally;
c. Intra-household family relations may have adverse effect on MRU's functioning;
d. Transformation in individual consciousness about gender equality and women's rights as well as organizational culture and governance are a prerequisite for gender equality and women's empowerment; and

e. Sustainable development is possible only if based on equal partnership and mutual respect between women and men.

x. Policy Objectives

This Gender Equality regulation is an instrument for the necessary changes at all levels of the MRU's functions and for addressing the root causes of gender inequality and the subtle ways in which they are sustained within MRU's practices. As an instrument for change, the key Policy objectives and actions focus on change at the personal level and at transforming the formal and informal rules and practices of the organization that are based on patriarchal norms and ideologies. These are the determinants of the rules of gender inequality in all organizations.

xi. Engendering the Curriculum

MRU shall take all necessary steps to engender the curricula of all its academic programmes.

- Strategic Actions:

a. Create a framework for engendering MRU curriculum;
b. Review and engender all existing curricula and ensure that new programmes are gender responsive;
c. Impart gender analytical skills and knowledge to all staff to enable them engender MRU teaching and learning programmes and build a gender responsive environment; and
d. Design and implement a mandatory cross-cutting core course on Gender and Development for all First Year undergraduate and postgraduate students.

xii. A Secure Environment

MRU Management/Administration shall promote a gender-friendly and inclusive secure environment at MRU in order to ensure effective protection of bodily integrity and dignity of every member of its community.

- Strategic Actions:

a. Implement policy and regulations on sexual harassment;
b. Develop and enforce guidelines for ensuring a secure environment that includes street and security lighting, posting security personnel at strategic points, providing night surveillance services, availing hotlines for emergencies, etc. Particular attention should be paid to halls of residence and private hostels;
c. MRU shall institute concrete mechanisms to address gender-based violence against students and staff; and
d. Strengthen counseling services and allocate adequate resources for prevention, management and rehabilitation of survivors of gender-based violence at MRU.

xiii. Student Enrolment, Retention and Performance

MRU Council shall support programmes aimed at improving gender balance in the enrolment, retention and performance of students across all disciplines.

➢ Strategic Actions

a. Continue to support affirmative action programmes to address gender gaps and imbalances in the enrolment of students to all its programmes, particularly for females in science-based programmes;
b. Provide student support services that enhance successful completion of their programmes;
c. Establish linkages with educational institutions and other stakeholders to increase enrolment and retention of disadvantaged female and male students;
d. Develop mechanisms for monitoring the performance and retention of students by gender;
e. Institute a mentoring system as a support mechanism for increasing the enrolment and retention of students, especially for female students in science-based disciplines and professions at MRU; and
f. Establish a loan scheme to assist students meet their tuition and related financial obligations.

xiv. Staff Recruitment, Training, Promotion and Recognition

MRU Council shall invest in endowments, infrastructure and resources to support activities aimed at improving gender balance in the recruitment, promotion, retention and performance of staff members at all academic and administrative levels.

➢ Strategic Actions:

a. Review staff appointments criteria to include gender-responsive considerations;
b. Review the criteria for accessing staff development opportunities in order to accommodate the various gender roles and needs of members of staff; and
c. Recognize and reward staff members who have excelled in their fields and service to MRU and the wider community.

xv. Women's Participation in Decision-making

MRU shall adopt proactive measures to increase the participation of women in decision-making through recruitment, promotion and retention in order to eliminate the existing gender imbalances within the systems, structures and all core activities of MRU.

➢ Strategic Actions

a. Design and implement programmes that ensure equal opportunities and affirmative action;
b. Design and implement a gender-responsive cross-generational leadership and mentoring programme, particularly for young female staff in the science disciplines;
c. Establish and implement programmes with adequate facilities and resources to support the multiple roles of MRU staff, particularly their career, studies and care-giving roles;
d. Develop and implement a gender sensitive and responsive human resource policy;
e. Develop a data bank of qualifications, specialties and experiences of women and utilize it as a basis for appointing more women on the supreme MRU governing bodies such as the Council, Senate, Appointments Board and other related bodies; and

f. Review the current system of representation to all supreme governing organs and devise a mechanism to ensure that it alternates between male and female in constituencies where there is an odd number (e.g., one representative) and 50/50 for constituencies with even numbers.

xvi. Organizational Culture

MRU shall promote and enforce a gender-responsive organizational culture to eliminate patriarchal-based inequities in MRU's activities.

➢ Strategic Actions

a. Develop and enforce policy guidelines on the use of gender inclusive language throughout the MRU;
b. Review and update all existing MRU policies, forms and procedures to eliminate sexist language and establish gender equality;
c. Develop and operationalize a policy prohibiting public display of visual aids and materials that are demeaning to women and men;
d. Develop and enforce a gender-sensitive code of conduct for MRU staff and students; and
e. Organize special gender awareness orientation programmes for new members of MRU governing bodies, staff and students.

xvii. Networking and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

MRU shall promote and support gender equality networks and partnerships in order to develop strong gender equality advocacy and activism within and outside it.

➢ Strategic Actions:

a. Develop and disseminate guidelines on engendering outreach programmes at the national, regional and international levels;
b. Develop and implement programmes that promote grassroots linkages and civil society organizations for greater gender activism;
c. Design and disseminate technologies for outreach programmes that are gender responsive; and
d. Encourage and support the participation of MRU staff and students in national, regional and international conferences and other fora that enhance knowledge and sharing on gender issues.

xviii. Research and Innovations

MRU shall adopt a gender-responsive research environment that improves its understanding of national development issues and impacts positively on the lives of women and men.

➢ Strategic Actions

a. Design and carry out a gender-focused research skills training programme for staff members;
b. Develop guidelines to ensure that all research processes and innovations, irrespective of discipline, integrate gender analysis;
c. 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;

d. Develop and regularly update a databank that is relevant to enhancing equal opportunity for both genders and link it to MRU's management tools;
e. Expand dissemination outlets of international standards for gender-focused research and publications; and
f. Design programmes to enhance women's and men's information and communication technologies (ICT) skills for research.

xix. Resource Mobilization and Gender Budgeting

MRU shall actively promote resource mobilization and gender budgeting processes as a way of ensuring adequate and sustainable budget allocations for effective institutionalization of gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue within its core activities.

➢ Strategic Actions

a. Develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy for financing the Gender Equality Policy objectives;
b. Design guidelines and implement a gender budgeting training programme for all key staff involved in MRU planning and budgeting processes;
c. Earmark budgetary resources, on the basis of a well-clarified percentage, for funding gender mainstreaming processes in all the core functions of MRU; and
d. Establish a mechanism for financial accountability for resources allocated for gender mainstreaming.

xx. Staff and Student Welfare

MRU shall plan and provide for the welfare of all its staff and students in order to achieve optimal productivity.

➢ Strategic Actions:

a. Engender human resource policies;
b. Formulate and implement a gender-sensitive policy on disability including accessibility to MRU buildings and facilities;
c. Construct both a functioning Staff Club and a Student Union Building with adequate facilities and catering for all;
d. Formulate and implement a policy on pregnant and parenting students and sensitize all relevant MRU staff on sexual and reproductive rights of students;
e. Invest in childcare facilities on MRU campuses for the benefit of parenting staff and students;
f. Accredit and set standards for private hostels that accommodate MRU students;
g. Improve and strengthen the delivery of gender-responsive health services in MRU Medical Centre;
h. Establish a gender-sensitive Medical Insurance Scheme for staff members; and
i. Enforce timely payments of terminal and contractual benefits for staff members.

xxi. Creation of the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate

MRU shall elevate the Gender Mainstreaming Division into a Directorate called Gender Mainstreaming Directorate (GMD) reporting to the Vice-Chancellor so as to enhance its capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the gender equality policy (GEP).

- Strategic Actions:

a. Seek approval of the repositioning of the Division to Directorate by Senate, Quality Assurance, Establishment Committee and Council;
b. If approved, establish the GMD by lobbying for more space and staffing;
c. Implement the GMD Resource Mobilization Strategy to enable the Directorate to access more resources and invest in a viable income generating enterprise; and
d. The GMD will organize six regular meetings for the Gender Mainstreaming Committee (GMC) every year to assess progress, M&E the GMD/Programme, consider implementation strategies and develop sustainability strategies.

xxii. Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability for Gender Equality

x. Responsibility for Implementation of the Gender Equality Policy

All individuals in MRU and all those associated with it have a responsibility to adhere to the Policy and apply it in their day-to-day activities and in all dealings with, or on behalf of the institution. The overall responsibilities in relation to this Policy are as follows:

a. MRU Council, as the employer, supreme governing body and the ultimate financial accounting authority of MRU, is responsible for ensuring that the institution fulfils its legal and fiscal responsibilities for promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination. In order to fulfill this responsibility, Council will 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. Council will further monitor progress on the implementation of the Policy. Council discharges this responsibility through the management structures of MRU;
b. The Vice Chancellor, who gives a consistent and high profile lead on gender equality issues, is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is effectively implemented and that staff are aware of their responsibilities, accountabilities, and training needs; ensuring that appropriate action is taken against staff or students who breach or violate the Policy. The Vice Chancellor will also oversee the engendering of public relations as well as the printing and design-related functions. The Vice Chancellor relies on the Deputy Vice Chancellors and other members of the Top Management team to take forward the gender equality agenda ensuring that it is given priority and is fully operationalized;
c. Deputy Vice-Chancellors and other members of Top Management. The Deputy Vice Chancellors and top managers take responsibility for activities of strategic importance to MRU, for example: The research agenda, health and safety, teaching and learning, human resources, support and information services, planning and budgeting, estates strategy, etc. In each of their respective portfolios, MRU Officers and Managers shall be duty-bound to incorporate gender equality priorities and implementation strategies;
d. Principals, Deans/Directors, Heads of Departments/Divisions and Sections: these stakeholders are responsible for the implementation of the GEP within their areas of responsibility. This

involves putting the policy and its strategies and procedures into practice; making sure all staff is aware of their responsibilities, and receive support and training in carrying these out; and taking action against staff or students who discriminate on grounds of gender;

e. Staff and Students: all staff and students have a role to play in promoting gender equality, and in creating and maintaining an environment where there is zero tolerance to harassment and discrimination; and

f. Partners, Contractors and Service Providers: All partners, associates, contractors, professional, statutory and accredited bodies, and those who provide services to MRU are responsible for complying with the GEP.

xi. Institutional and Regulatory Framework

The implementation of the GEP requires a well-coordinated and guided institutional framework to translate goals, objectives and strategies into action programmes at all levels of MRU's functions. The implementation of the policy will, therefore, be operationalized through the existing MRU's institutional structures or in new structures.

xii. Enhancing Organizational Capacity to Implement MRUGEP

MRU will aim to maximize its own institutional capacity and marshal a political will to achieve the objectives of the MRUGEP by providing adequate support, guidance and training to staff and students. In addition, organizational structures, working practices and management styles that reflect the principles of gender equality and equal opportunities will be promoted throughout MRU. There shall be a GMD of MRU reporting to the Vice-Chancellor so as to enhance its capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the GEP. The Senate Committee on Gender Mainstreaming shall be transformed into the MRU Gender Mainstreaming Committee, which shall be a joint Committee of Council and Senate. In turn, the current Gender Mainstreaming Sentinel Sites shall be integrated into mainstream structures of MRU as Unit Gender Mainstreaming Committees (GMC).

xiii. MRU GMC

The current mandate of the Senate GMC will need to be upgraded for it to oversee the establishment and operationalization of the Directorate and also to report to both the MRU Council and Senate on policy matters. The proposal, therefore, is to have a joint Council and Senate Committee on Gender Mainstreaming which shall provide the overall supervision of the Gender Mainstreaming Programme. It is also proposed that this Committee will have different technical working groups or sub-committees that will oversee the implementation of the different aspects of Gender Mainstreaming Programme.

xiv. Technical Working Groups/Sub-Committees

The GMC will have Technical Working Groups (TWGs) or Sub-committees composed of members drawn from relevant MRU units to offer expertise and extra support to the GMD. Examples are as follows:

a. Anti-Sexual Harassment Sub-committee;
b. Female Scholarship Initiative (FSI)-Sub-committee;
c. Technical Working Group on Engendering the MRU Curricular;
d. Women and Leadership Sub-committee; and

e. Resource Mobilization Sub-committee.

xxiii. GMD Student Peer Trainers Sub-Committee

For purposes of students' engagement in MRU's GMD, there shall be a Student Peer Trainers Sub-Committee whose mandate shall be to ensure that students are trained in MRU's GEP throughout the students' bodies.

xv. Unit Gender Mainstreaming Committees

For purposes of effective implementation of MRU's GEP, there shall be a Unit Gender Mainstreaming Committee at each MRU Planning Unit whose mandate will be to coordinate, supervise, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the MRU GEP at unit level.

xvi. Commitment to Proactive Implementation of the MRU GEP

MRU is set to proactively eliminate gender discrimination and focus on substantive gender equality rather than formal equality. MRU shall identify and make available appropriate resources to implement the monitoring and action matrix. The monitoring and implementation matrix outlines the steps MRU will take to operationalize the identified policy resolutions. The current and subsequent monitoring and implementation matrices shall constitute MRU's Gender Equality Strategic Action Plans which shall be the major tools for monitoring the implementation of the GEP and achieving its objectives. These tools shall take into account both qualitative and quantitative measures of achieving gender equality at MRU.

xxiv. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular and timely monitoring of progress regarding this Policy and associated action plans will be carried out by the GMD and where, appropriate, with the Human Resource Directorate, Directorate of Quality Assurance, Planning and Development Department, and Finance Department and Directorate of ICT Services, under the oversight of MRU's GMC. The Unit GMC will review their progress on the implementation of gender equality activities annually and submit them to MRU's GMC for consideration and forwarding to the Senate and to the Council. The Gender Mainstreaming Division shall annually produce gender data that supports the implementation and monitoring of the MRUGEP. It will also have the responsibility for tasking working groups to produce reviewed and updated versions of this Policy triennially. This Policy and annual progress reports will be published on MRU's website. In addition to formal publicity via committee discussions, outcomes and continuing work will be disseminated through publications, Internet and promotional materials. This Policy will become effective on approval by MRU Council.

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