



**Uva Wellassa
University**

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUITY / EQUALITY

1. Background

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, the UGC has taken up the challenge to address these unresolved concerns by establishing a Standing Committee on Gender Equity/Equality to advise the UGC on gender issues in October 2015. 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 to an absence of discrimination.

Gender equity 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.

2 Commitment of UWU

The Uva Wellassa University (UWU) is committed to the promotion 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.

3 Policy Framework

The UWU policy seeks to create a framework that will guide the university in integrating gender equity/ equality in all staff and student activities; to ensure a conducive, gender-just working and learning environment to all its members and are recognized for their excellent practices.

The policy framework should find on the simultaneous conceptualization of gender equity / equality. This means that both the similarities of men's and women's life experiences as well as the differences in their life experiences are considered in conceptualizations and discussions about gender.

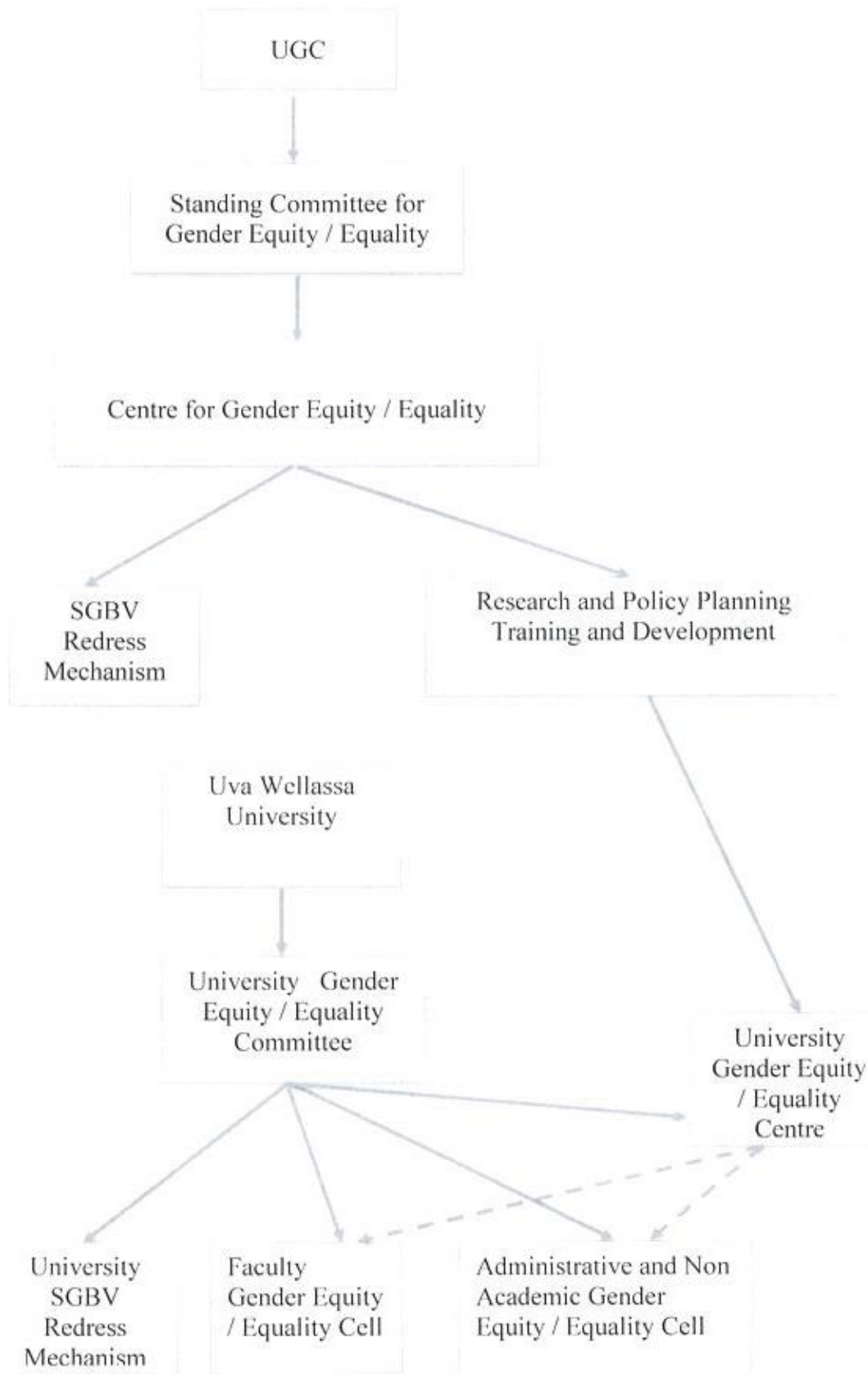


Figure 1: Management Structure of the University Gender Equity / Equality Committee

3.1 Scope of the Policy

The policy establishes the basis for UWU 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.

3.2. 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

3.2. Policy Mission

To enable the university to excel in providing a gender-just working and learning 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

4. 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 be upheld.

5. Specific objectives of the policy:

- Develop gender-sensitive university culture and university environment by
- developing university curricula and research, and contribute other gender-related inputs to the university community.
- Recognize gender education as a major pillar in the process of achieving gender equality/equity.

- Support the development of policy documents from a gender perspective and the use of gender sensitive language at all levels of activity.
- Prevent cases of SGBV at UWU.
- To house and implement a mechanism of redress for sexual and gender-based violence in university.
- Promote harmonious relations between different categories of staff and students at UWU
- 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, and Promote research and publications of research findings and recommendations in form of measures regarding SGBV

6 Policy Resolutions

6.1 Organizational culture

Objective: UWU shall promote and enforce gender-responsive organizational culture to eliminate gender inequities in all university activities to meet this.

To achieve this objective UWU 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

6.2 Awareness and creation

Objective: To enhance better understanding and appreciation of GEE and SGBV throughout the entire UWU community with the aim of preventing occurrence of the same

To achieve this objective university shall:

- Conduct workshops on GEE and SGBV for all staff and students
- Create and support an 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 sensitise the university community on the policy

6.3 Safety and security

Objective – The university management and administration shall promote a gender friendly and inclusive secure environment in the university in order to ensure effective protection of bodily integrity and dignity of every member of the university community to strengthen safety and security measures for all members of the University community

To achieve this objective UWU shall:

- Implement policy and regulations on sexual harassment
- Develop and enforce guidelines for ensure a secure environment that include street and security lighting; posting security at strategic 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 counselling services and allocate adequate resources for prevention, management, and rehabilitation of survivors of gender-based violence at the university

6.4 Curriculum and co- curricular programmes

Objective: To mainstream gender in the formal curriculum and strengthen the co-curricular programmes

To achieve the objective UWU shall

- 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

6.5 Capacity building and training

Objective: To enhance the capacity of members of the university community and managers to support the implementation of the policy

To achieve this objective UWU shall:

- 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 counselling unit to deal effectively with cases of SGBV
- Facilitate university health providers to recognize and be responsive to the emotional and psychological needs of staff and students

6.6 Research and innovations

Objective: The university shall adopt a gender-responsive research environment that improves our understanding of national development issues, and impacts positively on the lives of men and women

To achieve this objective UWU shall:

- 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

6.7 Women’s participation in decision making

Objective: The University 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 systems, structures, and all core activities of the university.

To meet this UWU shall:

- 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 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.

6.8 Resource mobilization and Gender Mainstreaming

Objective: The University 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 the core activities of the university.

To achieve this UWU shall:

- 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

6.9 Staff and Student welfare

Objective: The university shall plan and provide welfare of all its staff and students to achieve optimal productivity

To meet this UWU shall:

- 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

6.10 Creation of the GEE Directorate

Objective: A GEE Committee will be established reporting to the Vice Chancellor so as to ensure its capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the GEE Policy

To meet this UWU shall:

- Seek approval for the positioning of the GEE Committee by Senate and Council
- Establish the GEE Committee with adequate space and staff
- Implement Resource Mobilisation 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 and develop sustainability strategies

7 Monitoring, evaluation and Accountability for GEE

7.1 Responsibility for Implementation of GEE

All individuals in UWU and all those who are associated with UWU have a responsibility to adhere to the policy and apply it in their day-to-day activities and in all dealings with UWU. The overall responsibilities in relation to this policy are as follows:

UWU Council

As the Governing Authority of UWU, the Council is responsible for ensuring that UWU 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 structures of UWU.

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 they 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.

The Vice-Chancellor will rely on the Senior Management team to take forward the GEE Agenda so as to ensure that it is fully operationalized.

Director UWU GEE Centre

The Director of the UWU GEE Centre 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, trainings and counselling service.

The Director UWU GEE Centre is directly reported to the Vice Chancellor of the University.

Deans and Heads of Departments

They are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their areas of responsibilities. This involves putting 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 act against staff and students who discriminate on grounds of gender

7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective institutional arrangement for monitoring and evaluation are key components for achieving the objectives of the policy. This can only be achieved by instituting an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the system to ensure adherence to this policy.

7.3 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.

7.3.1 Uva Wellassa University GEE Committee

There shall be a GEE Committee of UWU 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 inculcate 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)
- Director UWU, GEE Centre (Co-Chair)
- Deans of Faculties
- Registrar
- Bursar
- Director/Staff Development Centre
- Senior Student Counsellor/Director
- Two academic representatives from each Faculty representing Faculty GEE Cell (one male and one female)
- Two academic support representatives representing Administrative Academic Supportive GEE Cell (one male and one female)
- Two student representatives from each Faculty representing Faculty GEE Cell (one male and one female)

Sub-Committees of the UWU GEE Committee

The GEE Committee will have following Sub-Committees composed of members drawn from relevant university units to offer expertise and extra support to the Centre:

1. Resource Mobilisation
2. Education and Research
3. Empowerment and Leadership
4. Grievances

Sub-committees will review their progress on the implementation of gender equity/equality activities annually and submit them to the GEE Centre for consideration and forwarding to Senate and on to Council.

The Policy and annual progress reports will be published on the UWU website.

7.3.2 Working Committee of Uva Wellassa University GEE Centre

There shall be a Working Committee of GEE Centre of UWU reporting to the Vice-Chancellor with the following roles:

- Provide training on gender equity and equality (including social intersections) for the establishment of a core team of gender experts
- To conduct research, review policies and contribute policy inputs in the university level
- Facilitate to do the curricular reforms to inculcate the concepts and practices of GEE
- Facilitate 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)
- Director UWU, GEE Centre (Co-Chair)
- Two academic representatives from each Faculty representing Faculty GEE Cell (one male and one female)
- Two academic support representatives representing Administrative Academic Supportive GEE Cell (one male and one female) Counsellors and (when recruited)
- Legal officer (when recruited)
- Two student representatives from each Faculty representing Faculty GEE Cell (one male and one female)
- Faculty Student Counsellors

7.3.3 Faculty level GEE Cells

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

Composition:

- Dean of the Faculty (Chairperson)
- Two academic representatives from each Department (one male and one female)
- Faculty Student Counsellor
- Two student representatives 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.

To achieve this UWU shall:

- Establish a committee to monitor and evaluate the performance of respective faculty in implementing this policy.
- Put in place appropriate monitoring and evaluating system to ensure that the necessary
- measures are taken promptly
- Put in place monitoring indicators with time frames to measure the implementation process
- Undertake to review the policy from time to time on informed research
- Put in place a forum for receiving views of members of UWU regarding the policy

7.3.4. Administrative and Non-Academic GEE Cell

There shall be GEE Cell for Administrative and Non-Academic to achieve the objectives of the University Committee

Composition:

- Vice-Chancellor (Chairperson)
- Registrar
- Bursar
- Two Representatives from each Administrative Division (one male and one female)

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

To achieve this UWU shall:

- Establish a committee to monitor and evaluate the performance of Administrative Divisions in implementing this policy.
- Put in place appropriate monitoring and evaluating system to ensure that the necessary measures are taken promptly
- Put in place monitoring indicators with time frames to measure the implementation process
- Undertake to review the policy from time to time on informed research
- Put in place a forum for receiving views of members of UWU regarding the policy