



**Faculty of Medical Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura**



**Policy Title: Gender Equity and Equality Policy 2022 of Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.**

**Policy Number: 04**

**Functional Area: Academic**

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**Approving Authority: Dean and administrative staff of Faculty of Medical Sciences**

**Administrative responsibility: Dean and administrative staff of Faculty of Medical Sciences**

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## **Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gender Equity and Equality (GEE) Policy 2022**

### **1. Name of policy**

Gender Equity and Equality Policy 2022 of Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

### **2. Commencement**

This policy commences on dd/mm/yy

### **3. Policy is binding**

Except to the extent that a contrary intention is expressed, this policy binds the Faculty of Medical Sciences, staff, students and any affiliates.

### **4. Overview**

Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura is a renowned medical faculty in Sri Lanka. Not only in teaching, but also in engaging in a variety of other activities such as hospital, research and community service. Whatever activity is undertaken, it is accomplished solely through teamwork. All undergraduate and postgraduate students, administrative staff, academics, and support staff work diligently to meet this goal. The full potential of working culture can be realized only in a conducive environment that is protected by physical and mental integrity. All human beings have an equal right not to be discriminated against. Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka 1978, clearly expresses that: "No citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or anyone of such grounds". There are sufficient national and international laws in place to protect an individual's human rights. The world is rapidly achieving the desired outcomes on human rights since 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted.

The UGC and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura have recognized systemic inequalities and inequities and have implemented numerous programmes to mitigate the negative consequences of gender inequality. It is a fact that unethical and illegal discrimination and harassment do not foster a conducive work or learning environment. Additionally, the FMS has placed an adequate emphasis on eradicating such an environment for everyone. Gender is not limited to men and women, but also includes non-binary students and staff.

Gender equality entails equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all genders. Environments that value women, men and others equally are safer and healthier, and providing equal opportunities for all would aid in the process of achieving one's full academic and professional potential. Thus, both men and women are free to develop their personal abilities and make their own choices without being constrained by rigid gender roles. Whereas, equity places a premium on fairness and justice, with an equal emphasis on the unique interests, needs, and priorities of men and women. Thus, the concept of gender equity still necessitates a gender analysis, as distinct genders may necessitate distinct needs. Equal does not mean that women and men are identical, but rather emphasizes the distinct interests, needs, and priorities of men and women. Additionally, the faculty has emphasized Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which is to achieve gender equality in order to ensure that all people live in peace and prosperity.

## 5. Application

This policy applies to

- (a) Faculty Staff and the Extended Faculty staff
- (b) Students (undergraduates and postgraduates)
- (c) Stakeholders that have direct dealing in terms of contractual agreements
- (d) Visitors
- (e) Members of the public who are dealing with Faculty for any matter

## 6. Definitions

### **Sex**

**Refers to** "the different biological, physiological and psychological characteristics of males and females, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones etc (That is assigned at birth)"

### **Gender**

**Refers to** "the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed. In this context where an individual may see themselves as a man, a woman, as having no gender, or as having a non-binary gender – where people identify as somewhere on a spectrum between man and woman"

### **Gender equity**

**Refers to** the "process of allocating resources, programs, and decision making fairly to all genders without any discrimination on the sexual orientation".

### **Gender equality**

Gender equality entails “the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices and honouring the gender/sexual differences”.

### **Sexual harassment**

**Refers to** “unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature” when either submission to or rejection of such conduct is made a condition of an individual’s employment or academic standing or is used as the basis for academic decisions (“quid pro quo” harassment”).

### **Gender mainstreaming**

**Refers to** the “process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making all the concerns and experiences of all genders/sexes and thereby an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”

## **7. Policy Framework**

This policy aims to create a framework for the Faculty to follow in order to achieve gender equality and equity and to prevent Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in all faculty and student activities. The policy anticipates that gender will be appropriately represented in all of its decision-making processes.

### **7.1. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all activities and academic programmes within the FMS. While preserving academic excellence, all aspects should be balanced against gender parity, with particular reference to students, research students, faculty, staff, and visitors, as well as any person who are regularly or temporarily employed, visiting and conducting business, or serving in any official capacity at the Faculty. The faculty demonstrates a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual and gender-based discrimination that arise or are reported. Faculty members, in particular, evaluate incidents on a case-by-case basis (not on a one-size-fits-all basis) by taking into account the unique circumstances in order to provide the best possible service to students, staff and stakeholders. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) prevention is also addressed thoroughly. The confidentiality of complaints is protected at all costs, and the concept of being non-judgemental is also upheld. This policy is primarily intended as an internal guide for the FMS at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

## 7.2. Policy Statement

This policy aims to meet the expectations of all staff members and students regarding gender issues by safeguarding their rights and fostering a gender-neutral educational and work environment. Gender issues are addressed in every faculty activity, both core and support, and thus the policy ensures gender main-streaming in order to maximize the working capacity of all individuals at all levels. Thus, the policy enables the following accomplishments:

- 7.1.1 Zero tolerance of discrimination on the basis of gender/sex (GBV).
- 7.1.2 Prohibit all forms of harassment directed at individuals based on their gender identity.
- 7.1.3 Sexual/gender harassment is not tolerated, and arrangements should be made for an appropriate investigation and supportive care through the University's GEE cell (SGBV).
- 7.1.4 Adequately educate all students and staff members about how an individual can be harassed or discriminated against on the basis of gender, and thus make arrangements to avoid becoming a victim or an offender.
- 7.1.5 All staff and students' rights and dignity are respected in order to assist them in reaching their full potential.
- 7.1.6 Gender education for students and staff to help them understand their rights based on their gender and sex.
- 7.1.7 Integration of gender issues into all facets of teaching, learning, clinical practice, work, and research. Appropriate gender balance and the elimination of discrimination will be considered when participating in social activities.
- 7.1.8 The policy is kept up to date in accordance with local, national, and international standards in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for students and staff.
- 7.1.9 Wherever possible, collaborate with local and international agencies to increase the awareness of related issues and also to find solutions to gender issues.

### 7.2.1. Policy vision

“A pleasant, peaceful and liberal, progressive study and work environment with zero tolerance for all forms of violence and harassment for students and staff, devoid of ragging and sexual and gender-based violence”.

### 7.2.2. Policy Mission

“To promote Gender Equity/Equality in the University by facilitating the establishment of gender sensitive university cultures and university environments which allow students and university staff (academic/administrative/support) to pursue their work without oppression and discrimination”.

## 8. Guiding principle

The policy is founded on the following principles:

- Safety, respect, confidentiality, non-discrimination, transparency, accountability and sensitivity are the guiding principles of GBV, and all of its components must be operational at all times.
- A human rights-based approach focuses on identifying and resolving the underlying causes of discrimination and inequality. Where necessary, the country's law is also observed. By doing so, the policy contributes to the development of a harmonious, motivated, and productive working environment for both students and faculty.
- Wherever possible, equal participation of male and female staff members and students in the policy's implementation shall be maintained in a prudent manner.
- Democratic values and human rights are upheld by faculty and students in all curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.
- Collaboration and partnership between faculty and students are valued.
- Gender main-streaming shall be promoted throughout the faculty's activities, including the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of its programmes.
- The principle of zero tolerance for SGBV must be followed.

## 9. Specific objectives of the policy

- Regularly raise awareness of GEE and SGBV among students and staff in order to persuade them of the mutual benefits of a gender-respectful environment.
- Educate faculty and students about what constitutes GEE and SGBV.
- Recognize gender education as a critical component of the process towards gender equality/equity.
- Promote harmonious relationships among FMS's various categories of staff and students.
- Attain gender parity in academic and administrative staffing and decision-making.
- Gender issues should be adequately addressed in the content of courses and course materials, as well as in other co-curricular or extra-curricular activities.
- Encourage the development of gender-sensitive policy documents and the use of gender-sensitive language at all levels of activity.
- Maintain a gender balance in decision-making activities for both staff and students.
- Obtain adequate emphasis on gender issues while dividing students into group activities such as body groups, clinical groups and in research teams.
- Prevent cases of SGBV at the Faculty where possible.
- Raising awareness of the University's GEE cell's reporting procedure.

- Provide prompt, effective, consistent, and equitable guidelines for the university's and faculty's handling of SGBV cases.
- Provide guidance for disciplinary procedures, justice, and reparation to those who have been wronged.
- Encourage research and publication of research findings and recommendations in the form of preventive measures for SGBV.
- Attendance to tutorials, clinical classes or any other group activity where attendance matters are to be adjusted with gender equality whenever possible and justifiable.
- Considers gender issues when planning infrastructure development. However, it should be balanced against with the available funds and infrastructure facilities.
- Ensure the availability or presence of gender sensitive infrastructure and facilities whenever a request is made. Eg. A mother (a student or a staff member) requests a place to breast feed an infant, a suitable place will be provided.
- Make sure that there is no gender based discrimination during student enrolments and staff recruitments. Maintain gender parity during staff recruitments where possible and when it is applicable. (Since student enrolments are performed based on the z-score, this is not applicable to the current system in Sri Lanka) Similarly, the most suitable staff member is recruited and no discrimination shall be entertained based on the gender what so ever.
- Encourage gender parity among office bearers of all the committees, unions and other associations (except in instances where 'Gender Related Clubs' are formed. i.e. Women's club and Men's club).

## 10. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability for GEE and SGBV institutional and Regulatory frameworks

The policy's goals and objectives should be accomplished through effective institutional arrangements. The monitoring and evaluation concept is critical in this context. A properly implemented regulatory framework ensures the accountability/success of the GEE/SGBV prevention policy.

### 10.1. Responsibility for implementation of GEE

All staff members and students are equally responsible for adhering to the policy, and they should ensure that the concepts are applied in their daily activities and across all institutional functions.

In any case, the following summarizes the overall responsibility for adhering to this policy.

#### **Dean of the Faculty**

The dean is accountable for the policy's effective implementation in all aspects. This includes implementing the policy and strategic actions and procedures, ensuring that all staff understands their responsibilities and receives support and training to carry them out, and taking action against staff and students who discriminate on the basis of gender. The dean of the faculty is responsible for financial matters and for overall legal compliance. The policy enables the Dean to monitor implementation progress. The coordinator should provide the Dean of the Faculty/faculty board members with an annual progress report on implementation and monitoring



### **Heads of the departments**

The heads of departments, units, and administrative sections are accountable for the policy's implementation in their respective territories for both students, staff and for applicable entities.

This entails taking actions to carry out the policy and strategic objectives. The head ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive support and training to carry them out, and should make arrangements to inquire immediately if any discrimination happens against a fellow worker or a student on the basis of gender. The head of the departments, units, and administrative sections should also follow the necessary steps to resolve the concern on his own or by referring it to the 'coordinator for gender issues' (see below for the details) and or to the University's center for GEE.

### **Coordinator for Gender issues pertaining to the FMS**

An academic staff member who is a senior lecturer or above is identified as the coordinator in gender related issues within the FMS. The overall responsibility goes to this staff member in relation the coordination of matters. The post is advertised and a suitable academic staff member is appointed by the Faculty board members. The term is three years at a given time.

The coordinator is responsible to conduct awareness programmes for both academic and non-academic staff members with the help and guidance of the Dean and University's center for GEE. In addition to that gender mainstreaming within the FMS is one of his prime duties within all three phases and during all the curricular and extracurricular activities where possible and applicable.

When a 'relevant complaint' is received through the helpdesk or by other means, the coordinator should take prompt actions to direct the person to a suitable place such as the university counselor/s, non-academic registrar, the Dean of the faculty, the University's center for GEE or a suitable place as the incident warrants to obtain the instant remedy or help.

The coordinator should have regular liaison with the Director of the University's center for GEE and the coordinator represents the FMS within the USJ in relation to gender related matters.

The following functions are to be handled by the coordinator at the end of each year, (by the 31st of December). The coordinator is expected to prepare an annual report including the issues, concerns, workshops and awareness programmes held, research performed, number of complaints received and actions taken and how the gender is mainstreamed within the faculty. First the report should be handed over to the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). Upon discussion at IQAC, a final report will be prepared with recommendations and comments. With the amendments it will be forwarded to the subsequent Faculty board meeting to be tabled.

#### **10.2. The procedure to be followed in acquiring assistance from the relevant stakeholders**

Students are encouraged to contact the Student's Help Desk, Grievances Committee, student counselors and even the Dean of the faculty (in extreme cases) whenever necessary. The first- contact person of aforementioned stakeholders shall direct the matter to a suitable platform by considering the specificity of the issue with immediate effect i.e. University's Center for GEE or any other suitable person/place.

The staff members are encouraged to contact the head of the unit or department if possible and where applicable the non-academic registrar, coordinator and or the University Center for GEEcom.

## 11. Rescissions and replacements

Not applicable

## NOTES

Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gender Equity and Equality Policy 2022

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Date commenced:

Approving authority: Faculty of Medical Sciences

Administrator:

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Rescinded documents: Not applicable

Related documents:

1. Center for Gender Equity & Equality, USJ (<https://www.sjp.ac.lk/cgee/>)

2. Preventing Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) - Strategies for Universities (<https://eugc.ac.lk/cgee/downloads/policies/SGBV.pdf>)

3. What is the difference between sex and gender? - Office for National Statistics [Internet]. Ons.gov.uk. 2021 [cited 3 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/whatisthedifferencebetweensexandgender/2019-02-21>