



Gender Equity and Equality Policy UB-PO-HR-005/0

1. Background and Purpose

This policy reflects the University of Belize's commitment and responsibility to gender equity and equality – a gender lens to advance equality for all faculty, staff, and students, promote, support, and consolidate gender mainstreaming and equity in its community, and enable better relationships and fair opportunities at the institution.

Gender equality is achieved when both men and women enjoy access to a learning environment, resources, and opportunities regardless of gender across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making.

2. Scope/Users

This policy applies to all University employees and students.

3. Definitions/Terms

Employees	An "Employee" of the University of Belize is a person whom the University hires to perform a service for a wage or salary, in accordance with the Labour Laws of Belize and in accordance with the Mission and Vision of the University.
Engendering	The process of integrating gender considerations and concerns into words, actions, and assessment.
Gender	Refers to socially constructed roles, responsibilities, and relations within the University's sociocultural structure.
Gender Awareness	A state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges, and needs. It is also the recognition of the differences in the interests, needs, and roles of women and men in society

Gender Equity and Equality Policy

and how they result in differences in power, status, and privilege. It also means the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequity and discrimination.

Gender Discrimination	Differential treatment of individuals on the grounds of gender.
Gender Equality	Refers to equal opportunities for men and women, boys and girls in access to and control over resources. Both sexes have equal voice, rights, freedom, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development.
Gender Equity	The principle of fairness and justice in the distribution of resources and access to opportunities for all employees and students of the University.
Gender Inequality	The obvious or hidden differences that exist between people purely on the basis of being female or male. Ways in which males and females are treated differently in relation to opportunities, roles, privileges, status, positions, and responsibilities in society.
Gender Gap	A difference in any aspect of the socio-economic status of women and men, arising from the different social roles ascribed by society to women and men.
Gender Mainstreaming	The consistent integration of gender concerns into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, plans, programmes, activities, and projects at all levels.
Gender-Sensitive	The state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including differences in their needs, as well as the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposefully to address them.
Gender Stereotyping	Constant portrayal in the media, the press, or in the education system of women and men occupying certain roles according to the socially constructed gender division of labor and expectations in behavior.

Gender Equity and Equality Policy

Sex The biological state of being a male or female. Sex is not equal to gender.

4. Policy Statement

The University of Belize is committed in its actions to eliminating gender inequality within the University community. The University will encourage a gender-sensitive, responsive, equal, and friendly environment.

4.1. Foundation

The University believes in the following as the foundation of the Gender Equity and Equality Policy.

- a. All genders are to be treated equally and optimally served at all levels and in all units;
- b. All genders have equal rights to information, the right to be heard, and the right to be safe and protected;
- c. All forms of discrimination against all genders of students are unacceptable;
- d. All forms of discrimination against all genders of employees, unequal division of pay, sexual violence and exploitation, and unequal work rights are unacceptable;
- e. Full and effective gender participation and equal opportunities and representation for leadership and decision-making in the workplace will be enforced;
- f. Technology and channels for communication should be utilized to promote the empowerment of all genders.

4.2. Gender Principles

Principles of the University of Belize are based on the following values:

- a. To ensure that the dignity and integrity of all employees and students are equally valued. Sexual harassment and sexist behaviour are violations of human dignity;
- b. To ensure there is equal opportunity in the enrolment of students and employment of employees;
- c. To work in substantial and creative ways to ensure all employees and students have the same privileges and the same opportunities to advance and develop;

Gender Equity and Equality Policy

- d. To ensure an administrative and teaching culture that is gender sensitive in all aspects of the university's continuous operations, including admissions, employment, and service delivery;
- e. To build an all-inclusive academic community, which provides the opportunity for all persons to develop their full potential irrespective of disability, socio-cultural background, and gender;
- f. To ensure that all employees are valued equally in all dimensions of the University's work and are considered equally in opportunities for development, promotion, and leadership;
- g. To ensure that the University environment is gender friendly and supportive of the specific needs of different genders.

4.3. Objectives

The focus of the policy is to provide equitable opportunities for both females and males. To promote and enhance gender equity, the University shall:

- a. Promote the use of gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming in:
 - All University documents, written and spoken language, and data relevant to the achievement of equal opportunities;
 - All published matter attributed to the University of Belize;
 - All information conveyed to employees and students when applying for vacant positions or acceptance to the University, respectively.
 - Institutional strategic planning, and that policy development, operational practices, and procedures are all informed by the principles of equity.
- b. Address any perceived barriers and establish an inclusive environment free from:
 - Gender discrimination;
 - Gender inequality;
 - Gender stereotyping.
- c. Ensure that all employees and students are fully aware of and accept their responsibilities to perform their roles in a way that genuinely promotes fairness and respect for themselves and others.
- d. Monitor compliance with the policy and the effectiveness of the actions taken to promote equity.

4.4. The Office of Human Resource Management is the policy owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration, and interpretation of this policy.

Gender Equity and Equality Policy

5. Relevant Legislation

The Revised National Gender Policy of Belize 2013.

6. Key Related Documents

University of Belize Faculty and Staff Handbook (2000)

University of Belize Student Handbook

7. Policy Approval and Review

This policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees and will generally be subjected to a five-year review. The Office of Human Resource Management may, from time to time, recommend policy amendments to the Board of Trustees via the Office of the President.

8. Amendment History

Revision #	Description of Changes	Reason(s) for the Change	Date of revisions
0	Initial Release	Not Applicable	Same as Initial Release