



28<sup>th</sup> July, 2017.

SABARAGAMUWA UNIVERSITY of SRI LANKA (SUSL)

# Policy Framework for Gender Equity and Equality of SUSL

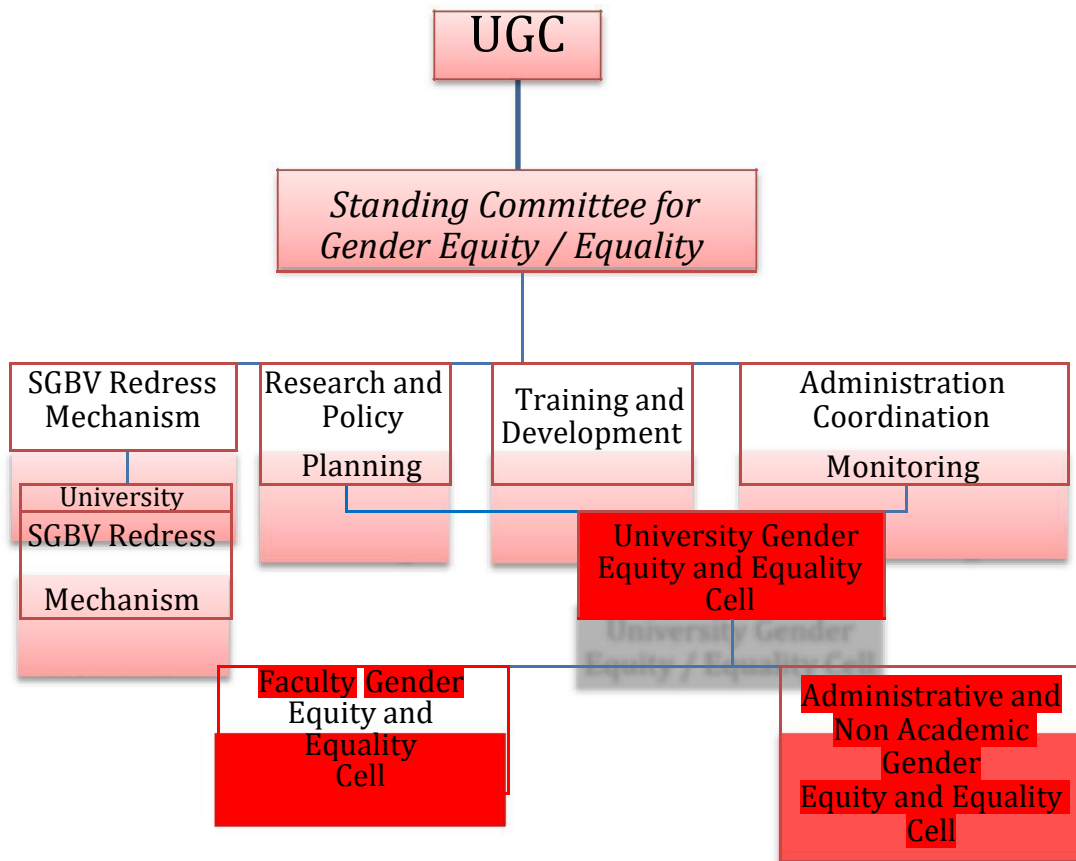
Centre for Gender equity and equality  
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**SABARAGAMUWA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA  
(SUSL) POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUITY AND  
EQUALITY**

(Effective from 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 2017).

**01. 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 Centre for Gender Equity and Equality (CGEE) in October 2016, so as to institute sociable 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. The UGC - GEE Centre will be managed directly under the UGC Standing Committee for Gender Equity/Equality. The Management structure of the UGC Centre for Gender Equity/Equality upto the University level is given below.



## 02. Commitment of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL)

SUSL is committed to the promotion of Gender Equity and Equality (GEE) and women’s empowerment where all students, academic, administrative and support staff, female and male, enjoy equal opportunities, human rights, and free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. As such members of the University community have the responsibility of ensuring that it is free from gender inequity and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

Thus SUSL policy on GEE is designed to promote equality between women and men; to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and to provide an inclusive working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected to assist them in reaching their full potential. The university will work to remove any barriers which might deter people of the highest ability from applying to SUSL as staff or students.

## **03. Policy Framework**

The policy seeks to create a framework that will assist the university to encourage gender equity and equality in all staff and student activities, ensure equitable participation and appropriate representation of both genders in all its decision-making process and prevent Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

### **03.1. Scope of the Policy**

The policy establishes the basis for SUSL cooperation with the Government and society at large to promote 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.

### **03.2. Overarching Policy Statement**

Achieving gender equality and non-discrimination in educational and work environment for all staff and students is a strategic objective of SUSL. The university explicitly plans to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue into both its core and support functions. SUSL is committed to lead the next generation on the way to securing equality of opportunity for women and men whether as students, staff members or external users of our facilities.

In realizing gender equality SUSL shall endeavour to do everything within its means not to overlook the diversities among and between members of SUSL community and prohibit sexual or gender based harassment. The policy recognizes gender education as a major pillar in the process of gender equality and women empowerment through transformative development process.

SUSL is committed to work with all its stakeholders within and outside the university guided by the strategic actions outlined here.

#### **03.2.1. Policy Vision**

A gender-responsive university with zero tolerance toward SGBV.

### **03.2.2. Policy Mission**

To enable the university to excel in providing a gender-responsive organizational environment and to integrate gender into the functions of the university in order to attain gender equality and women's empowerment and to promote zero tolerance against SGBV.

### **04. 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.

### **05. Specific objectives of the policy:**

- Achieve gender equality in academic and administrative staff through the gender equal policies in recruiting and decision making process.
- Achieve gender balance in enrolment of students.
- Maintain gender-disaggregated statistics on both staff and students for decision making.
- Address gender issues in the content of courses and course materials.
- 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 SUSL.
- Sensitise SUSL university community on what constitutes SGBV
- Create awareness on the reporting procedure for victims of SGBV including circumstantial evidence.
- Promote harmonious relations between different categories of staff and students at SUSL.
- Provide prompt, effective, and consistent and fair guidelines for handling cases of SGBV at the university.

- Provide disciplinary procedures, justice and reprieve for the aggrieved.
- Promote research and publications of research findings and recommendations in form of measures regarding SGBV.

## **06. Policy Resolutions**

### **06.1. Organizational culture**

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

To achieve this objective SUSL shall:

- Develop and enforce policy guidelines on the use of gender inclusive language throughout the university
- Establish the gender equality in academic and administrative staff through the gender equal policies in recruitment and decision making process
- 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

### **06.2. Awareness and creation**

*Objective: To enhance better understanding and appreciation of GEE and SGBV throughout the entire SUSL 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 SGBV
- 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

### **06.3. 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 SUSL shall:

- Implement policy and regulations on sexual harassment
- Develop and enforce guidelines to 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

#### **06.4. Curriculum and co-curricular programmes**

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

To achieve the objective SUSL 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

#### **06.5. 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 SUSL 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

## 06.6. 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 SUSL 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

## 06.7. 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 SUSL 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.

## **06.8. 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 SUSL 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

## **06.9. 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 SUSL 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

## **06.10. Creation of the Centre for Gender Equity and Equality (CGEE) Directorate**

*Objective: A CGEE 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 SUSL shall:

- Seek approval for the positioning of the CGEE by Senate and Council
- Establish the CGEE with adequate space and staff

- Implement Resource Mobilisation Strategy to enable the CGEE to access resources
- CGEE will organize regular meetings once every two months to assess progress, monitor and evaluate the GEE Programme , consider implementation strategies and develop sustainability strategies

## **07. Monitoring, evaluation and Accountability for GEE**

### **07.1. Responsibility for Implementation of GEE**

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

#### **SUSL Council**

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

#### **The Vice-Chancellor**

The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented and that staff are aware of their responsibilities, accountability, and training needs; ensuring that appropriate action is taken against staff or students who violate the policy.

The Vice-Chancellor relies on the Senior Management team to take forward the GEE Agenda ensuring that it is fully operationalised'

#### **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 take action against staff and students who discriminate on grounds of gender.

## **07.2. 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.

## **07.3. 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.

### **07.3.1. SUSL University GEE Cell**

There shall be a GEE Cell of SUSL 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
- To do 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

Enhance its capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the GEE Policy at the institutional level.

Inquire complains of sexual and gender based violence and propose to university councils for disciplinary actions to offenders and facilities to victims.

## **Composition of SUSL GEE Cell:**

Vice-Chancellor (Chairperson)

Director/ Centre for Gender Equity and Equality (CGEE)

Deans of Faculties

Registrar Bursar

Director/Staff Development Centre

Two academic representatives from each Faculty (one male and one female)

Two academic support representatives from each Faculty (one male and one female)

Two student representatives from each Faculty (one male and one female)

## **Sub-Committees of the SUSL GEE Cell**

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

I. Resource Mobilisation

II. Education and Research

III. Women empowerment (women and Leadership)

IV. Grievances

Sub-committees will review their progress on the implementation of gender 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 SUSL website.

### **07.3.2. Faculty level GEE Cells**

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

#### **Composition**

Dean of the Faculty (Chairperson)

Two academic representatives from each Department (one male and one female)

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 SUSL shall:

- Establish a committee to monitor and evaluate the performance of SUSL 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 SUSL regarding the policy

### **07.3.3. Administrative and Non Academic GEE Cell**

#### **Composition:**

Registrar (Chairman)

Two Representatives from each Administrative Department (one male and one female)

Two Non- academic representatives from each faculty and centre (one male and one female)

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This policy framework was approved by the SUSL council.

**Council memo number: 17:229:58**

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