Quantum University Policy for Gender Equity

(As approved in 1st Meeting of Board of Management dated 23/06/2018)

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POLICY FOR GENDER EQUITY

1. PREAMBLE

Quantum University is dedicated to promoting gender equity and equality through its Gender Equity Policy. The policy ensures a discrimination-free environment where all genders have equal access to resources and opportunities. The university has established committees, such as the Internal Complaints Committee and the Women and Gender Sensitization Committee, to address complaints and empower victims. These efforts aim to create a safe and inclusive space for all members of the institution, fostering personal and professional growth.

2. OBJECTIVES

In particular, the Policy aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. The policy focuses on gender mainstreaming and the prevention of gender-based violence.
2. It aims to enable the full development of intellectual potential for individuals of all genders.
3. The policy ensures the dignity and integrity of all individuals, regardless of their gender.
4. It provides guidelines for equality and equity of opportunities, including access to knowledge, employment, and services.
5. The policy advocates for a gender-sensitive culture in all aspects of the university's operations.
6. Affirmative actions are proposed to address historical gender imbalances.
7. It aims to transform values, norms, and practices that hinder gender equity and equality.
8. The policy supports women's empowerment as students and staff members, promoting gender accountability.
9. Discrimination and violence at work and in work-related activities are prevented.
10. Staff and students are educated about their rights and responsibilities regarding gender-based violence.
11. Measures are instituted to ban discriminatory practices, procedures, and rules.

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The policy guidelines, proposals, and provisions in this Gender Equity Policy Framework will apply specifically and directly to all departments, administration, and other intuitional structures of the University.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Affirmative Action

It refers to the process by which institutions identify and take positive steps to enhance opportunities in education, training, and employment of underrepresented people. It is often time-bound, ending when the perceived imbalance has been addressed.

3.2 Discrimination

As a result of sex, race, social status, religion, health condition, or related factors, people suffer from biases, prejudices, and intolerance. The discrimination of women and men in higher education institutions can manifest itself in a number of ways, including systematic exclusion from an executive authority, unfair allocation of research, teaching resources, discouragement from taking certain courses, and hostility towards gender activism.

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3.3 Gender

Biological characteristics are referred to as sex, while socially constructed characteristics are called gender. A person's gender determines their roles, privileges, resources, and responsibilities in society.

3.4 Gender Analysis

The identification, investigation, and use of data to inform action to address inequalities that arise from the different roles of men and women, or the unequal power relationships between them and the consequences of these inequalities on their wellbeing.

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3.5 Gender Awareness

Gender awareness is consciousness and recognition by an institution of the importance of gender and its effect on its objectives, plans, and programs.

3.6 Gender Blindness

When an organization or institution develops objectives, plans, and programs without recognizing or incorporating gender issues that may affect their functioning, the development of plans, their implementation, or their outcomes, it is considered a conscious development.

3.7 Gender Budgeting

This is the examination of all expenditures and revenues from a gender perspective. All expenditure is examined for its relevant accessibility, impacts, and consequences for men and women. It involves scrutinizing the ways the resource expenditure can be made to reflect the institutional goal of gender equity.

3.8 Gender Dynamics

Relationships and interactions between and among boys, girls, and women. The power relationships that define gender and gender dynamics are informed by sociocultural ideas about gender. Gender dynamics either reinforce or challenge existing gender norms.

3.9 Gender Equality

- The policy promotes the absence of discrimination based on a person's sex.
- It emphasizes equal rights, freedom, and opportunities for both sexes.
- Gender equality ensures that individuals can realize their full potential.
- Society values males and females equally for their similarities and differences.
- It recognizes the diverse roles that individuals play in economic, social, cultural, and political development.

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3.10 Gender Equity

Fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between men and women. The concept recognizes that men and women have different needs and strengths and that these differences should be identified and addressed to rectify the imbalance between the sexes.

3.11 Gender Gap

Gender gap is the difference in the scores between men and women on attitudes, interests, behavior, knowledge, and perspectives on particular issues.

3.12 Gender Inequality

The ways in which males and females are treated differently in relation to opportunities and responsibilities in society.

3.13 Gender Mainstreaming

- Gender mainstreaming involves analyzing the impact of planned actions on both men and women.
- It ensures that women's and men's concerns are considered in the design and implementation of policies and programs.
- The strategy aims to prevent the perpetuation of inequality in all areas of society.
- Gender mainstreaming encompasses political, economic, and social spheres.
- It involves integrating gender perspectives in the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs.

3.14 Gender Roles

- Gender roles are clusters of socially or culturally defined expectations for behavior.
- These expectations dictate how males and females should behave in specific situations.
- Gender roles are often based on stereotypes that suggest distinct physical and psychological characteristics for each gender.
- These stereotypes influence individuals' behavior and characteristics.
- Gender roles tend to view male and female roles as distinct and mutually exclusive

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3.15 Gender Sensitivity

- Gender sensitivity involves transforming gender awareness into practical changes within institutions and organizations.
- It requires institutions to go beyond mere awareness and actively address gender issues.
- A gender-sensitive institution not only recognizes gender disparities but also takes action to address them.
- Gender sensitivity leads to changes in perceptions, plans, and activities to promote gender equality.
- It emphasizes the need for institutions to be responsive and proactive in addressing gender-related challenges.

3.16 Gender Stereotype

- Gender stereotypes are fixed and oversimplified perceptions of a particular group, attributing similar characteristics to all members.
- These stereotypes lead to behavioral patterns that align with societal expectations.
- They serve as benchmarks for evaluating individuals based on their gender.
- Gender stereotypes limit individuality and can reinforce unfair judgments and biases.
- It is important to challenge and overcome gender stereotypes to promote equality and respect for all individuals, regardless of their gender.

3.17 Sex

The biological differences between men and women are normally universal and are determined at birth. It is the physiological state of being male or female.

3.18 Assault

Assault represents a continuum of forcible physical forms of pressure that compel individuals to engage in any activity against their will.

3.19 Consent

- Consent is the voluntary and explicit expression of willingness to engage in a specific activity or behavior, communicated through words or unambiguous actions.
- It requires active communication from each party involved and cannot be assumed based on silence or the absence of protest.

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- Merely having a prior or current social relationship does not imply consent.
- Consent can only be implied when both parties are in a balanced power dynamic, without one party exerting power or influence over the other.
- Consent is crucial to ensure respectful and consensual interactions, particularly in situations involving personal boundaries and relationships.

3.20 Exploitation

Taking non-consensual advantage of another person. Exploitation includes but is not limited to electronic recording, photographing, or transmitting sounds or images without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved, voyeurism, and distributing intimate or sexual information about another person without that person's consent.

3.21 Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is a broad term that consists of harmful acts committed against a person's will, exploiting power imbalances related to gender differences. These acts can cause physical, sexual, and psychological harm, violating a person's dignity in both public and private spheres. It is predominantly perpetrated by men, while women are increasingly becoming victims of such violence.

3.22 Harassment

Threatening to commit an action against another person, stalking, and cyber-stalking. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to words, persistent requests for sexual favors or dates, gestures, touching, unwanted sexual overtures, engaging in indecent exposure, coerced sexual intercourse, and rape.

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3.23 Intimidation

- Workplace intimidation involves intentionally causing fear or feelings of inadequacy in a coworker or student.
- It can take various forms such as verbal threats, unjust criticism, sabotage, sexual harassment, or physical violence.
- Intimidation in the workplace is a serious issue that undermines a healthy and productive work or learning environment.
- Organizations and institutions should take proactive measures to prevent and address workplace intimidation, ensuring the safety and well-being of their members.

3.24 Perpetrator

Any staff or student who engages in gender-based workplace violence.

3.25 Risk factors

Contextual, individual, societal, and workplace factors predispose individuals to be victims of gender-based violence.

3.26 Sexism

- Alienating behavior refers to offensive conduct that alienates and marginalizes individuals of all genders.
- It can be intentional or unintentional and negatively impacts the working or learning experiences of both men and women.
- Addressing and eliminating alienating behavior is crucial for fostering an inclusive and respectful environment.

3.27 Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct refers to any unwanted sexual behavior that occurs without consent or through the use of force, intimidation, coercion, or manipulation. It encompasses various forms such as gender-based violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and sexual intimidation. Perpetrators of sexual misconduct can be both men and women, and it can transpire between individuals of the same or different sexes.

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3.28 Survivor

A person who has experienced gender-based violence and is taking medical, legal, and psychological steps to overcome their trauma.

3.29 Victim

Any staff or student who is the object of gender-based workplace violence. A victim is compelled to behave as expected out of fear.

3.30 Violence

Violence is a spectrum of control and oppression that encompasses emotional, social, economic, and physical harm. It can manifest overtly through acts of physical assault or covertly through intimidation, threats, and deception. Violence can occur as a single incident or be repeated over time.

3.31 Workplace

This encompasses all locations, physical and virtual, under the control of Quantum University where staff and students are required to be or visit for their work and studies. It includes physical premises such as departments and affiliated faculty, as well as virtual settings like offices, stores, classrooms, hostels, cyberspace, and any other work-related location.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Management and Academic Council
b. The Council and Board shall ensure the sustenance of gender friendly environment by promoting gender equity and eliminating discrimination across all constituent departments and Faculty by formulating and enforcing such policies
c. The Council and Board shall receive and consider bi-annually a progress report from the Vice-Chancellor on steps taken or being taken to provide a gender-friendly environment in the University.

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d.   Roles and Responsibilities of the University Management

The Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellors, and other Executive Directors, Deans, Directors, Chairpersons, Head of the Departments, and all Academic and Administrative units

i) **Facilitate monitoring of compliance with gender policies.**

ii) **Address gender differences and inequalities in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of university work policy.**

iii) **Support and sustain the incorporation of a gender perspective into university policies, programs, and governance.**

iv) **Include gender analysis and planning in strategic and operational planning as well as budget planning.**

v) **Formulate strategies for addressing gender issues in policies, programs, and projects of departments, institutes, and schools.**

vi) **Emphasize training and sensitization on gender-sensitive practices to ensure a gender-equality and equity perspective is incorporated at all levels.**

vii) **Review curriculum to mainstream gender into all core university programs.**

5. POLICY STATEMENTS

a. Governance

i)   Establish policies and procedures that ensure gender equity and equality in the management of the university.

ii)   Ensure gender equity in appointment and promotions to senior positions in the university, such as deans and directors, Pro-Vice Chancellors, and administrative staff.

b.   Academic Programs

i)   Implement affirmative action in the admission of male and female students in programs where either gender is underrepresented.

ii)   Institute grants scholarships to assist the disadvantaged gender

iii) Ensure the use of gender-responsive teaching and learning strategies to eliminate bias in language, attitudes, and instructional processes, including in academic research.

iv)   Promote gender-responsive practice in hiring and appointment of academic staff.

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c.   Work Settings

i)   Create an environment that fosters participation of people of all genders in safety and free from harassment

ii)   Address gender issues related to sexual offenses

iii)   Provide adequate, appropriate, and gender-responsive facilities and amenities for all students and staff.

6. STRATEGIES

i)   Disseminate the Gender Equity Policy document to all members of the University.

ii)   Conduct awareness training for all staff and students on their gender rights and responsibilities.

iii)   Use sex-disaggregated data to enhance gender awareness and responsiveness.

iv)   Ensure parity in appointments to management positions without prejudice to merit.

v)   Ensure the gender rule is achieved by enforcing terms of appointment and limitations to terms of appointment, thereby ensuring rotation of responsibilities.

vi)   Implement affirmative action without compromising competence as a means of redressing gender imbalances in the recruitment and capacity development of staff where there are gender equity gaps.

vii)   Implement affirmative action for admitting qualified students in programs with an underrepresentation of either gender

viii)   Source for scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds in programs where either gender is underrepresented.

ix)   Include tenets of the gender mainstreaming policy in orientation programs for new students.

x)   Mobilize resources for research on gender issues.

xi)   Disseminate the policy document to all members of the University.

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xii) The University will ensure that information on gender-based violence and available resources are displayed in easily accessible areas, such as restrooms, notice boards, and various campus buildings. This information will include details about support services, including gender-based violence focal person(s), the complaints mechanism, and referral options. Additionally, the University will make this information available on its official website and through newsletters to provide comprehensive access to resources and support.

xiii) Conduct awareness training for all staff and students on their rights and responsibilities in preventing gender-based violence in the workplace.

xiv) Create an environment that fosters participation of all genders in safety and free from gender-based violence in any form.

xv) Provide adequate, appropriate, and gender-responsive facilities and amenities for all staff and students.

xvi) Address issues related to gender-based violence in the workplace. The response shall include, but not be limited to: identifying a focal person to whom staff or students can go to seek help; resource and referral information; work schedule adjustments or leave as needed to obtain assistance; and workplace relocation, if feasible. Appropriate assistance will be provided based on individual needs and availability.

xvii) When any staff or student needs to take time off for medical assistance, legal assistance, court appearances, counseling stemming from gender-based violence, relocation or to make other necessary arrangements to create a safe situation, the University shall, to the extent legally possible, facilitate the process with no prejudice to the victim.

7. POLICY PROVISIONS

Quantum University shall, to the fullest extent possible without violating any existing rules, regulations, statutory requirements, contractual obligations, and collective bargaining agreements, designate and direct all staff and students to follow these guidelines.

a) There shall be zero tolerance for any form of gender-based violence in the workplace.

b) The University will take all reasonable measures to foster a safe work environment for all staff and students.

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In accordance with existing statutes and regulations, the University shall hold staff or students accountable under this policy who engages in the following confirmed behavior:

1.   Misusing university resources to commit an act of gender-based violence.
2.   Committing an act of gender-based violence from or at the workplace or while on official business from any location.
3.   Misusing job-related authority and/or resources to negatively affect victims or perpetrate an act of gender-based violence.
4.   Threatening, harassing, or abusing a person at the workplace, from the workplace, or on university business using workplace resources such as work time, phones, fax machines, mail, email, or other means.

Falsely accuse any staff or student of Quantum University of gender-based violence.

5.   No staff or student will face penalties or disciplinary action in the workplace solely for being a victim of gender-based violence. The institute is committed to preventing the recurrence of abuse and harassment by working with victims.
6.   Victims of gender-based violence will receive appropriate support and assistance, including legal, medical, and psychological support.
7.   Staff or students identified as perpetrators of gender-based violence will be subject to investigation, which may result in disciplinary measures being taken against them.
8.   Any staff or student found to have threatened, harassed, or abused someone at the workplace or from the workplace may face corrective or disciplinary action, including dismissal if deemed necessary.

8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The University based on the policy has formed formal bodies for awareness and for redressal of complaints. These constituent bodies are:

i)   **Women and Gender Sensitization Committee** – It will focus on two areas -
a)   **Women** - It is the task force specifically for all issues related to women i.e. staff, faculty, and students in the university. It is a platform for women to voice their concerns and issues they face specific to their gender.

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- The aim is to empower women, ensuring they work with dignity, reassurance, and equality in all aspects of life.
- The focus is on securing women's rights and entitlements and assisting them in achieving their goals.
- The committee will address the psychological, physical, nutritional, health, and emotional needs of women staff and students.
- Awareness drives, campaigns, seminars, panel discussions, and workshops will be organized by the committee to promote these objectives.

b)   **Other Genders** -

- The objective is to raise awareness about gender-related issues, promoting gender equality and equity.
- It serves as a platform for students to express their concerns regarding gender issues.
- The goal is to sensitize the youth, faculty, and staff to gender issues and foster positive values that support all genders and their rights.
- This will be achieved through training, awareness campaigns, panel discussions, seminars, workshops, and other activities.

ii)   **Internal Complaints Committee** – In pursuance of UGC (Prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students in higher educational institutions) Regulations, 2015 with Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act 2013, Internal Complaints Committee is constituted to deal with complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace.

- The University's policy is inclusive of all genders, allowing any person, regardless of gender, from Quantum University to approach the committee.
- The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are comprehensive and must be strictly followed by all stakeholders. Non-compliance may result in legal action.
- The formation of the Internal Complaints Committee will follow the guidelines provided by UGC/Government of India, as directed by the Vice-Chancellor.

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iii) **Psychological Counseling Cell –** is a critical and pioneering undertaking for enhancing psychological, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness.

The University's Psychometric Lab and Psychological Counseling Cell, staffed by clinical and counseling psychologists, will offer counseling sessions to women and individuals of all genders, providing support and guidance for addressing gender-related challenges. Additionally, they will conduct training programs to raise awareness and enhance understanding of these issues.

The Women and Gender Sensitizing Committee and Internal Complaints Committee appointed by the Vice-Chancellor shall oversee the implementation of this policy by-

i) **Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the policy.**
ii) **Collecting and analyzing sex-disaggregated and other relevant data to guide planning and programming.**
iii) **Sensitizing employees on gender mainstreaming and on prevention of gender-based violence.**
iv) **Reviewing and advising on all university policies and procedures that may impact on gender equality and equity.**
v) **All information relating to staff or students' involvement in a situation relating to gender-based violence, to the extent possible, shall be kept confidential and shall not be made part of any staff or student's personnel file.**

9. BREACH OF POLICY

All members of the Quantum University community, including staff, faculty, management, and students, are required to fully comply with the principles and guidelines outlined in this policy. Any violation of this policy will be subject to the disciplinary procedures established by the University. Additionally, service providers, contractors, and visitors are expected to acknowledge and uphold the University's gender policies in their interactions and engagements with the institution. Any individual entrusted with ensuring compliance with the policy who fails to adhere to the rules will face appropriate action by the relevant authority.

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