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## **1.0 Introduction**

Gender issues permeate socio-cultural, political and economic spheres of life. The importance of a gender policy in tertiary institutions is appropriate in providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. This enables the institutions to remain sensitive to gender equity and equality within their academic environments.

Bolgatanga Technical University (BTU) seeks to create a conducive environment for learning and work for staff and students devoid of discrimination. This will ensure a gender parity environment and consolidate gender mainstreaming in line with the University's Strategic Plan (2022-2031). This policy is also in line with the convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 10.

The gender policy advances the University's commitment to gender issues and adopts specific policy objectives in its implementation strategies in accordance with both Ghanaian and international policy documents as follows:

- i. The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992)
- ii. UNESCO Chair on Gender Policy and Human Rights (418), 1997
- iii. The National Gender and Children Policy (2001)
- iv. The BTU Staff Development Policy (2020)
- v. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

This policy therefore defines the University's vision on gender and strategies to achieve this vision.

## **2.0 Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for gender mainstreaming in the University, promote and enhance gender equity and provide equitable opportunities for both females and males of the University community in terms of services, policies, procedures and practices.

The specific objectives of the policy include:

- i. Ensuring that gender issues are integrated into the University's strategic planning, operational practices and procedures.
- ii. Providing and promoting inclusiveness in the University's programmes and activities across genders.
- iii. Building the capacity of staff and students on gender issues.

## **3.0 Scope of the Policy**

This policy guides the gender issues of staff and students of the University. It seeks to address the different implications of people of different genders in policy, programmes, and activities of the University. It is thus applicable to gender issues irrespective of the status or physical orientation of individual in the University. Some gender issues pertinent to that are addressed in the policy include sexual harassment, gender discrimination in employment, gender discrimination in the admission of students, the denial of certain rights as a result of gender, balanced participation in activities, job segregation and equal employment opportunities.

## **4.0 Principle Guiding the Policy**

The policy is founded on the principle of equity of all persons as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, UNESCO Chair on Gender Policy and Human Rights (418) established in 1997 as well as the Staff Development Policy of the University (2020).

## **4.1 Basic Gender Principles**

The University believes in the following principles as the basis of all the strategies of this policy.

- i. That both men and women have equal rights and must be treated equally and optimally served at all levels and in all functions.
- ii. Fairness to all is a basic and fundamental human right.
- iii. Right to information and the right to be heard are fundamental human rights.
- iv. All individuals have the right to be safe and to be protected by the University.
- v. The need to be heard through the establishment of a Gender Unit.

## **5.0 Functions of the Gender Unit**

- i. Reports to the Vice Chancellor of the University through the Registrar.
- ii. Provides administrative guidance for gender programmes.
- iii. Ensures that gender is mainstreamed in the activities of the University.
- iv. Ensures compliance of the Policy.
- v. Carries out and coordinates research on gender and gender-related issues.
- vi. Provides capacity building in gender sensitization and mainstreaming for the BTU community.
- vii. Leads and coordinates advocacy work leading to gender mainstreaming and equity in the University.
- viii. Facilitates awareness-raising and confidence-building among staff and students.
- ix. Monitors and follows up on the implementation of gender programmes.
- x. Creates awareness regarding the channels of communication and systems for complaints and redress.

## **6.0 General Strategies of the Policy**

The University shall adapt the following general strategies to meet the objectives of this Policy.

### **6.1 The University shall establish a Gender Committee to advise Management on matters of gender in the University.**

The Committee shall execute the following functions:

- i. Develop a Gender Action Plan for the University.
- ii. Ensure the provision of resources for Gender Programmes.
- iii. Promote equal opportunities in the University.
- iv. Receive and monitor complaints of members of the University community regarding gender issues.
- v. Organise an annual diversity week for members of the University to showcase different cultures and their effects on gender roles.
- vi. Implement cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS awareness, management and prevention, etc.
- vii. Stimulate and encourage women and men to show interest and seek involvement in the University's governance and decision-making processes.
- viii. Report on gender issues to the Academic Board.

NB: Two students shall be represented on the Gender Committee with one being a female.

### **6.2 Gender Equity shall be integrated into the University's Strategic Plan to:**

- i. Ensure that gender mainstreaming is factored into the Strategic Plan of the University.

- ii. Develop annual work plan to ensure that gender mainstreaming activities are in line with the Strategic Plan of the University.
- iii. Meet and report as approved by the Academic Board.

### **6.3 Create awareness about responsibilities regarding gender issues**

- i. Make available the Policy to staff and students through the University's website and as may be required for fresh students and newly recruited staff.
- ii. Establish a mechanism to support staff and students on gender mainstreaming activities.

### **6.4 Address any perceived barriers and target areas to remove inequities**

- i. A Gender Forum shall be established to discuss key cross-cutting issues and develop strategies for mitigating challenges.
- ii. The Gender Unit will collaborate with the Students' Representative Council, TUTAG (BTU) and TEWU (BTU) to develop information gathering strategies to help remove perceived barriers.

### **6.5 Improve the ability to recruit, retain, support and develop staff and students**

- i. Develop and disseminate a gender-focused Admissions Policy for the University.
- ii. Develop and disseminate a Recruitment Policy for the University.

## **7.0 Responsibilities of Key Players**

### **7.1 The Vice Chancellor**

The Vice Chancellor has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the University complies with the Gender Policy.

## **7.2 The Registrar**

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the University's Gender Policy is implemented, and that appropriate action is taken against individuals who do not abide by the precepts of the policy. This also entails providing support and training staff and students on the policy implementation for effective outcomes.

## **7.3 Deans and Heads of Department**

Deans and Heads of Department are responsible for putting the policy, strategies and procedures into practice and ensuring that staff and students carry out their responsibilities.

## **7.4 Staff**

It is the responsibility of staff not to discriminate based on gender.

## **7.5 Students**

Students shall recognize gender and not discriminate, harass or bully anyone. Incidents relating to gender should be reported to the Gender Unit.

## **8.0 Policy Implementation**

The University shall publicize this Policy on the University's website. The Registrar shall monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Policy. The Policy shall be reviewed from time to time, in accordance with recommendations by the Academic Board and/or national level policies/directives on gender.