



SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

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Custodian:	REGISTRAR		
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* Revised policy approved by: CHAIRMAN	<i>[Signature]</i>	Date:	4.4.2025
Implementation procedures approved by:	Senate	Date:	

1. PREAMBLE

The University has established this Policy to define sexual harassment and to outline procedures for filing complaints, investigating sexual harassment claims and issuing appropriate disciplinary measures in the case of violations. The University will operate a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The University observes the rights of students and employees to pursue educational, social, cultural, employment and professional activities in an atmosphere that respects their rights and dignity. As such, any harassing, threatening, or intimidating activity, or any practice by an employee or student which unreasonably abuses, endangers, jeopardizes personal safety, or interferes with official duties, class attendance, or educational pursuits is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment of students and employees is treated as a form of discrimination by the University and will not be tolerated

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees and students of Great Zimbabwe University. All employees and students, at every level, will be protected as well as be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge, for any violation of this policy. Employees and students are prohibited from sexually harassing others both on and off the University's premises and during or outside of work hours. Sexual harassment can occur in all aspects of employment as well as all aspects of teaching and learning. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Great Zimbabwe Staff Handbook, Code of conduct for staff and students.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this policy –

- 3.1 **'Sexual harassment** is unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favours, or unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with an employee's job performance or a student's academic performance, and also creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work and learning environment. It involves a violation of a person's right to choose when and how they want to engage in sexual activity. These behaviours have the general effect of embarrassing a person, humiliating, demeaning, or belittling one's character. Furthermore, such conduct negatively affects an individual's work performance or academic achievement, or advancement by creating an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment. Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents

'Student' is a learner who is enrolled at the University on a part-time or full-time basis.

'Employee' is any individual who is legally employed by the University on a full-time, fixed-term or casual basis.

'Complainant' - a person who complains that he/she has been sexually harassed.

'Respondent' - a person against whom a sexual harassment complaint has been lodged.

'The University' - Great Zimbabwe University

4. FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- 4.1 The determination of what constitutes sexual harassment will vary with the particular circumstances. However, the following shall include some of the forms of sexual harassment:
- 4.1.1 Unwanted physical contact which is sexual in nature including patting, fondling, kissing, cornering or grabbing as well as strip search by or in the presence of the opposite sex, sexual assault or physical intimidation.
 - 4.1.2 Suggestive sexual comments; such as sexually related jokes, sexual innuendos, foul sexual language, obscene sexual gestures or enquiries or comments about one's sexual life and unwanted graphic comments about a person's body made in their presence or directed towards them.
 - 4.1.3 Displaying pornographic and sexually suggestive pictures, cartoons, drawings and sexual objects and also indecent exposure.
 - 4.1.4 Transmitting sexually offensive text, written, telephonic and any other electronic and non-electronic communications.
 - 4.1.5 Quid pro quo harassment where a University employee or student attempts to influence the salary, training, dismissal or any other condition of employment for a sexual favour or where in the case of a student their academic performance (The definition of employee shall be adopted from the University Regulations as read together with the Labour Act and shall include Management, Lecturers, Teaching Assistants, Non Academic Staff and any other individual who is in a contract of employment with the University)

5. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 To sensitize the University community about the negative effects of sexual harassment, thereby promoting a sense of responsibility.
- 5.2 To provide an institutional framework that supports sexual harassment victims to use their rights, maintain their dignity, and refuse to succumb to sexual harassment pressures.
- 5.3 To take steps to prevent sexual harassment at Great Zimbabwe University and, if necessary, to take corrective action, including disciplinary action.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 The University is committed to creating an environment that upholds human dignity and respect for employees and students by eliminating all forms of harassment and hence encourages all its members to report such incidents. All such matters will be dealt with promptly and expeditiously according to the laid down procedures.
- 6.2 All persons occupying supervisory positions (including deans, departmental chairpersons and management), representatives of the student affairs department and the students' representatives shall take reasonable steps to disseminate this policy to inform their respective constituencies of the forms of sexual harassment and the procedures to be followed in reporting such cases.
- 6.3 A single incident is enough to be considered sexual harassment; it does not have to be repeated behavior. The person engaging in unwelcome behavior does not have to intend to be sexually harassing the other person for the behavior to be considered sexual harassment. Regardless of what was intended, sexual harassment is defined by the nature and the impact of the behavior, not the intention behind it.
- 6.4 Any complaint lodged under this policy shall be treated with diligence, fairness, justice and due process.
- 6.5 All complaints of sexual harassment shall be treated with confidentiality to the extent practical. Only those individuals necessarily involved in the investigating process and the decision regarding the resolution of the complaint shall ordinarily be provided access to information regarding any allegation of sexual harassment.
- 6.6 Both the complainant and the respondent shall be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

7. POLICY PROCEDURE

7.1 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

- 7.1.1 Anyone who is subjected to sexual harassment should, if possible, inform the alleged perpetrator that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. It is recognized that sexual harassment may occur in unequal relationships (for example, Lecturer and his /her student, boss/subordinate, peer to peer) and that it may be difficult for the victim to inform the alleged perpetrator.
- 7.1.2 If a victim cannot directly approach an alleged perpetrator, they can approach their Supervisor, Head/Chairperson of Department, Dean of Students, Security Department or the Human Resources department (it is important to note that the member is at liberty to choose the office they would want to report to).
- 7.1.3 Disclosures of sexual harassment will be treated in confidence to protect the victim's privacy. However, in some instances, a matter may need to be escalated or referred without agreement from the student/employee, particularly in circumstances that may:
- a. Constitute a criminal offence;
 - b. Constitute an occupational health and safety risk; or
 - c. Require disciplinary action
- 7.1.4 If a matter needs to be escalated or referred, the person handling the matter will notify the person who made the disclosure of who has been informed of the case.
- 7.1.5 When a designated person receives a complaint, he/she will:
- 7.1.6 Immediately record dates, times and facts of the incident (s);
- 7.1.7 Ascertain the views of the victim as to what outcome he/she expects;
- 7.1.8 Ensure that the victim understands the university's procedures for dealing with the complaint;

- 7.1.8.1 Discuss and agree on the next steps: on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the victim from pursuing the matter in criminal courts if they are not satisfied with the outcome;
- 7.1.8.2 Keep a confidential record of all discussions
- 7.1.8.3 Respect the choice of the victim; and
- 7.1.8.4 Ensure that the victim knows that they can lodge the complaint outside the institution through the relevant legal framework, if after exhausting all internal channels they are still unsatisfied.
- 7.1.8.5 Throughout the complaints procedure, a victim shall receive counseling from a Counsellor within the University if they so wish.

7.2 INFORMAL COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

- 7.2.1 If the victim wishes to deal with the matter informally, the designated person will:
 - 7.2.1.1 Allow the alleged perpetrator to respond to the complaint in writing;
 - 7.2.1.2 Ensure that the alleged perpetrator understands the procedures to be followed during the matter;
 - 7.2.1.3 Facilitate a discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution which is acceptable to the complainant or refer the matter to a mediator within the University to resolve the matter;
 - 7.2.1.4 Ensure that a confidential record is kept of what happens;
 - 7.2.1.5 Follow on up the outcome of the complaints mechanism to ensure that the behavior has stopped; and
 - 7.2.1.6 Ensure that the above is done speedily and within 14 days of the complaint being made.

7.3 FORMAL COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

- 7.3.1 If the victim wants to make a formal complaint or if the informal complaint mechanism has not led to a satisfactory outcome for the victim, the formal complaint mechanism should be used to resolve the matter.
- 7.3.2 The Head of Department, Dean or Supervisor who initially received the complaint will refer the matter to the Human Resources or Student Affairs Office to instigate a formal investigation.
- 7.3.3 The Human Resources or Student Affairs Office will then refer the matter to a Disciplinary Authority for a disciplinary hearing in terms of the Statutory Instrument 15 of 2006.

8. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 8.1 The University does not prohibit any member from reporting their cases at the police especially if the case is of aggravated circumstances (for example, indecent exposure, stalking, sexual assault and obscene or threatening communications).
- 8.2 The policy does not exhaust what may be regarded as sexual harassment under Zimbabwean Law. However, the Labour Act and related legislation such as the Criminal Code compel employers and those in positions of authority to uphold fair practices in the workplace and institutions.
- 8.3 In dealing with sexual harassment issues, all persons in authority are encouraged to strictly adhere to the statutes of the land.

9. FALSE ACCUSATIONS

- 9.1 A member of staff or student who makes a frivolous, malicious or false accusation of sexual harassment against another person commits a disciplinary offence.
- 9.2 A person convicted of a disciplinary offence under this regulation shall be liable to any or a combination of the following:
 - 9.2.1 written warning
 - 9.2.2 ordered to give a 'public' apology to the aggrieved party
 - 9.2.3 ordered to compensate the aggrieved party
 - 9.2.4 dismissal
 - 9.2.5 demotion

9.2.6 suspension

9.2.7 transfer

10. PROHIBITION OF VICTIMISATION

10.1 A student or member of staff shall not retaliate against or victimise a person who complains of sexual harassment.

10.2 A student or member of staff shall not retaliate against or victimise a witness who provides evidence of sexual harassment.

10.3 A respondent who retaliates against or victimises a complainant of sexual harassment commits a disciplinary offence and shall, on satisfaction, be subjected to disciplinary action.

11. DISTRIBUTION

11.1 The University shall inform and provide a copy of this policy to all University employees, officers, directors, student workers, and all other persons or contractors who provide substantial service to Great Zimbabwe University.

12. AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY

12.1 The policy shall be amended/ reviewed every five years or as and when need arises. All such changes shall be reduced in writing and approved by the Executive and Council.

12.2 Minor changes to the policy may be suggested and approved by the Vice-Chancellor, and these shall be communicated to the university community and stakeholders for their edification and noting.

13. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy document shall take effect from the date of signature and shall be read in conjunction with the Great Zimbabwe Staff Handbook.