



UNIVERSITY OF
Global Health
EQUITY

Gender and Diversity Policy

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1. Policy overview

This policy document utilized the University of Global Health Equity's Gender and Diversity Audit of 2020, to assess successes and challenges in promoting gender equity and diversity at UGHE. Based on this audit as well as PIH's Gender Policy, this document outlines UGHE's policy statements, principles and strategies for addressing the challenges.

The Gender and Diversity Audit which guided this policy document was prepared through engagement of a Gender and Diversity Task Force at UGHE, composed of an equal number of female and male staff and students at UGHE.

Development of this gender and diversity policy is therefore based on the inputs of staff and students, who come from diverse socio-cultural, economic, academic and professional backgrounds.

2. Rationale

Education is one of the pillars for the development of a society, and UGHE has a firm belief that gender equity and diversity is necessary in its academic practices, research, community and student engagement activities, planning and implementation mechanisms. This is also in line with the Government of Rwanda's commitments to address gender gaps in academics through strategies and policies such as the Girls' Education Policy, National Gender Policy and the Education Sector Strategic Plan, among others.

3. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to define UGHE's vision, direction, and principles with regard to gender equity and diversity. UGHE is committed to an institutional policy, culture and plan that ensure gender equity and diversity in research, academic practices, projects, programs' design, implementation and evaluation practices; as well as overall organizational culture.

4. Methodology

Different methods have been used to elaborate this gender and diversity policy. An online survey tool has been circulated among UGHE's staff and students to gather information about capacity, planning and implementation practices and needs at different levels. In-depth interviews and consultations with representatives of different departments of UGHE were also conducted by the Gender and Diversity Task Force to explore practices and gaps in relation to gender equity. Policy documents were reviewed to collect further information and experiences on the subject.

The various consultations and document reviews were instrumental in identifying gaps and areas of improvement in gender equity and diversity within UGHE.

5. Policy statement

Mainstreaming gender and embracing diversity are among the objectives of UGHE, as affirmed by the establishment of its Center for Gender Equity. UGHE commits to pursue gender equity and diversity in its academic, research, community engagement and overall organizational practices. To this end, all UGHE staff and students should uphold principles of gender equity and diversity to ensure that their planning, implementation, and reporting mechanisms instill equity in UGHE's programs and community.

6. Guiding principles

In line with PIH's¹ guiding principles in its gender equity, UGHE also recognizes the following:

- **UGHE recognizes intersectionality:** women/girls and men/boys and other gender identities in the University are not homogenous groups, but may have different experiences and challenges owing to inequalities based on class, race, ethnicity, ability and gender, among others. Any consideration of gender in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation must consider and account for the impact of the intersections of these multiple identities.
- **UGHE believes equity is the route to equality:** Gender equality means that women, men and gender minorities have equal opportunity to realize their full human rights and to contribute to, and benefit from, economic, social, cultural and political development. It is based on women, men and gender minorities being full and equal partners in their homes, their communities and their societies.

Gender equity, on the other hand, means being fair to women, men and gender minorities. To ensure fairness, measures are often needed to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women, men and gender minorities from otherwise operating as equals.

- **UGHE believes in local solutions:** UGHE strives to promote the active participation of communities in the issues and interventions that shape their lives. In the pursuit of gender equity and diversity, as an institution, UGHE aims to help the communities identify, prioritise and appraise the norms they want to change based on their knowledge of local conditions, and then to support them to identify and implement realistic solutions. As part of this commitment, UGHE aims to support the implementation of national plans.
- **UGHE aims to transform:** To achieve gender equality and universal health coverage, it is important to transform norms that create barriers and gaps. This involves, among other

¹ **Partners in Health (PIH)** is UGHE's parent organization, and has over three decades of experience in delivering health services to some of the world's poorest communities. PIH has recently developed a Gender Policy, based on which some specific elements of this policy are formulated.

actions, dismantling patriarchal structures that adversely impact health and affect people's ability to participate equally and freely in society. This requires UGHE to: 1) foster critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics within the institution and among the people UGHE serves; 2) identify and promote positive norms that support equality and inclusive, enabling environments through UGHE's academic and other programs; 3) promote the relative position of women, girls and gender minorities, and transform the underlying social structures, policies and deeply embedded social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

As part of this process, UGHE is committed to addressing gender inequities and gaps in minority representation in its academic practices (curriculum development and training activities), research, the health systems UGHE designs and supports, the communities UGHE serves, and the workforce UGHE employs. Through UGHE's work, the aim is to contribute to fostering conditions that would enable people to become empowered.

- **UGHE recognizes women's participation and leadership in decision-making as a crucial component to the success of all global health efforts.** Diversity is consistently recognized as critical to good governance, in large part because a diversity of perspectives yields improved decision making. Yet when it comes to gender diversity, women continue to be under-represented. Ensuring women have seats at the table is a priority for PIH, and also UGHE.
- **UGHE is committed to eradicating harmful practices:** Eliminating harmful practices, including early and forced marriage, son preference, and sexual and gender-based violence, will allow women, girls and other marginalized groups to have control over their bodies, make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and lives more broadly, and enjoy their human rights.

7. Policy measures

The policy is composed of three main areas of focus: (1) Gender-Transformative HR Practices, (2) Academic practices, Research and Community engagement programs, and (3) an Implementation, Monitoring, and Tracking Plan.

7.1. Gender Transformative HR Practices

UGHE is committed to a work environment that promotes measures for gender equality. UGHE is committed to applying a gender-transformative approach to its human resources practices and policies to eliminate discrimination and inequality across our offices and campus.

- UGHE shall monitor the gender balance of employee composition at all levels: UGHE will work to reduce the under-representation of women within managerial and leadership positions.

- UGHE shall ensure a gender-equitable and diversity inclusive approach in the recruitment, hiring and retention of internal and external candidates, training participants, scholarship opportunities and promotion for both academic and administrative staff. UGHE shall monitor the gender balance of applicants through all stages of recruitment and address under-representation of women in leadership and under-representation of men in other roles.
- UGHE shall provide training for hiring managers, as relevant to apply non-discriminatory and equality focused practices through all stages of recruitment and hiring.
- UGHE shall ensure equitable access to professional development and staff training opportunities: UGHE is committed to a special focus on developing leaders among under-represented genders and community groups.
- UGHE shall ensure that ‘equal pay for equal work principles’ is employed in the development of remuneration scales: UGHE is committed to ensuring that pay is based on skills and experience, rather than on gender or prior income.
- UGHE has a Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy and emergency response protocol and will investigate and respond to all forms of sexual harassment among students and staff accordingly. This policy outlines clear procedures for reporting harassment and violence, documenting incidents and appeals; along with the roles of an anti-sexual harassment committee. This committee should be in place to oversee any reports at all times.
- UGHE shall create a workplace culture that promotes equality, understanding and awareness of diverse identities: UGHE is committed to developing internal practices and procedures that include the needs of diverse groups including gender minorities.
- UGHE shall ensure that it has leave policies, including parental leave policies, which promote gender equality.
- UGHE will seek out and facilitate participation in capacity building opportunities for all staff, students, leadership, and management: By doing so, it aims to enhance their knowledge and skills related to diversity, gender and organizational culture, including internal operations and HR practices.
- UGHE designates funds for the attainment of its gender equity and diversity goals and enables staff to formulate work plans and budgets accordingly.
- UGHE shall periodically review its education policies such as those regarding tuition, degree programs and transfer policies for gender transformativeness and diversity inclusivity.

7.2. Gender Transformative Academic practices, Research and Community engagement programs

- **Curricula and training:** UGHE shall integrate gender and intersectionality perspectives in its curricula so that students can gain a better understanding of these issues to address inequity. To this end an Introduction to Gender and Social Justice Course will be given to all undergraduate students. UGHE's Master's Programs shall provide relevant courses on gender issues.
- **Staff capacity:** UGHE shall ensure that all staff engaged in research, academic and community engagement activities have the required level of knowledge and awareness about gender and diversity issues. As relevant, short training or resource materials shall be available to all staff.
- **Community engagement:** Programs need to support gender equity and diversity, endeavor to overcome sexual or gender-based barriers, overcome discrimination, and address violence prevention and care. UGHE believes diversity and gender equity will be featured as an integral component of UGHE's community activities, across design, implementation and knowledge-sharing phases.
- **UGHE shall participate in and create spaces for knowledge exchange and learning:** These spaces will bring together diverse stakeholders to advocate for and work towards a collaborative diversity and gender-transformative design among participants.
- **UGHE shall enhance the design of programs** to be diversity and gender transformative by actively understanding the norms that lead to gender inequalities and engage with contextual dynamics in the communities where we work.
- **UGHE shall conduct and incorporate gender analyses** across programs, policies, and procedures to assess and contextualize how gender impacts access to care and use of services as well as health outcomes, and to enhance our efforts to advancing gender equity. Relevant sets of Key Performance Indicators need to be integrated into UGHE's existing monitoring, evaluation and research systems in order to enable the production of gender-disaggregated data.
- **UGHE is committed to using diversity and gender sensitive terminology** in various programs and research studies.

7.3. Gender Transformative Implementation, Monitoring, and Tracking Plan

As part of UGHE's commitment and responsibility to provide transparency and accountability, UGHE's relevant departments (such as the M&E department, HR and the Center for Gender Equity) will ensure that subsequent action plans are adequately monitored, evaluated, and reported on through a gender transformative approach. This includes but is not limited to:

Disaggregating data by sex, gender, age, etc. to inform all areas of service delivery and programming and in reporting. Ensuring the development of relevant Key Performance Indicators

by the M&E and other departments to better measure progress and the true impact of projects and programs on gender equity.

Using diversity inclusive, gender-sensitive or gender-neutral language in all policies, institutional or departmental strategic plans and official documents.

Seeking community input and participation in identifying areas of priority or need, which is integral in establishing plans, budgets and human resources, and can be done as part of the planning process through a needs assessment.

Setting equity definitions, goals and objectives, whenever possible, during program or project design and based on community input, and in collaboration with the Center for Gender Equity and the M&E department.

Strengthening Sexual Harassment Reporting Mechanisms that prioritize the victims' safety, implement safe and effective systems and procedures of accountability, and are inclusive of all UGHE personnel, student body and contractors.

Gender budgeting during the planning stage for all relevant projects and programmes and as a way to mainstream gender through the budgetary process.

Training staff on how to maintain a diversity and gender-sensitive approach in implementation and M&E, including inclusive reporting, program or project design, and budgeting.

Incorporating the Gender and Diversity Policy into the culture and day-to-day practices of UGHE's workforce through an institutional Gender Transformative Strategy.

Identifying resources needed for the implementation of Gender Transformative Policy and Strategy, such as the financial capabilities, human resources, and partnerships needed in order to make sure that the work is moving forward.

Glossary of Terms²

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and identities of female, male and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they behave and interact and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender is usually incorrectly conceptualized as a binary factor (female/male). In reality, there is a spectrum of gender identities and expressions defining how individuals identify themselves and express their gender. (Heidari et al., 2016)

Gender-sensitive/inclusive language means “speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.” (UN, 2021)

Gender budgeting: “involves conducting a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.” (eige.europa, 2021)

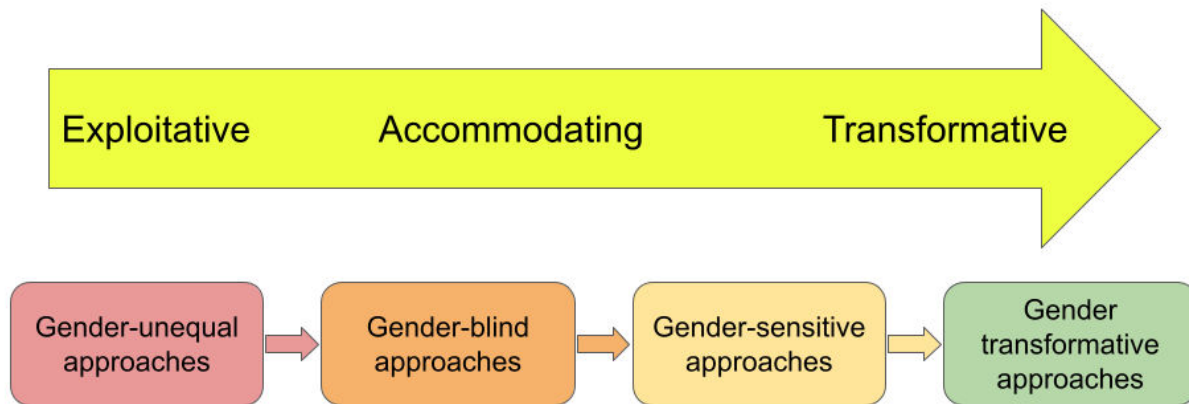
Gender equality: “Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys...[implying] that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men” UN Women

Gender Equity is “the process of being fair to men and women. To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Equity is a means. Equality is the result.” (UNESCO, 2021)

Intersectionality recognizes that “social identity categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability are interconnected and operate simultaneously to produce experiences of both privilege and marginalization... conversations while inspiring new debates across the academy... Intersectionality encourages recognition of the differences that exist *among* groups, moving dialogue beyond considering only the differences *between* groups. Originating from discontent with treatments of “women” as a homogenous group, intersectionality has evolved into a theoretical research paradigm that seeks to understand the interaction of various social identities and how these interactions define societal power hierarchies. (Smooth, 2013)

Gender Integration Continuum: This tool classifies programmatic approaches along a continuum of gender inequity to gender equity.

² Adopted from PIH’s Gender Policy and listed references



Gender Integration Continuum tool developed by the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) (2017)

Gender-unequal approaches reinforce inequalities and stereotypes.

Gender-blind approaches are designed without prior analysis of the culturally defined set of economic, social, and political roles, responsibilities, rights, entitlements, obligations, and power relations associated with being female and male and the dynamics between and among men and women, boys and girls.

Gender-sensitive approaches acknowledge gender norms and consider men and women's specific needs.

Gender-transformative approaches aim to promote equality and achieve program objectives by transforming gender norms by 1) fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics, 2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment, 3) promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups, and transforming the underlying social structures, policies and broadly held social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities. (IGWG, 2017)

Sex disaggregated data: "Data collected and tabulated separately for women and men. They allow for the measurement of differences between women and men on various social and economic dimensions and are one of the requirements in obtaining gender statistics. However, gender statistics are more than data disaggregated by sex. Having data by sex does not guarantee, for example, that concepts, definitions and methods used in data production are conceived to reflect gender roles, relations and inequalities in society." (eige.europa, 2021)

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