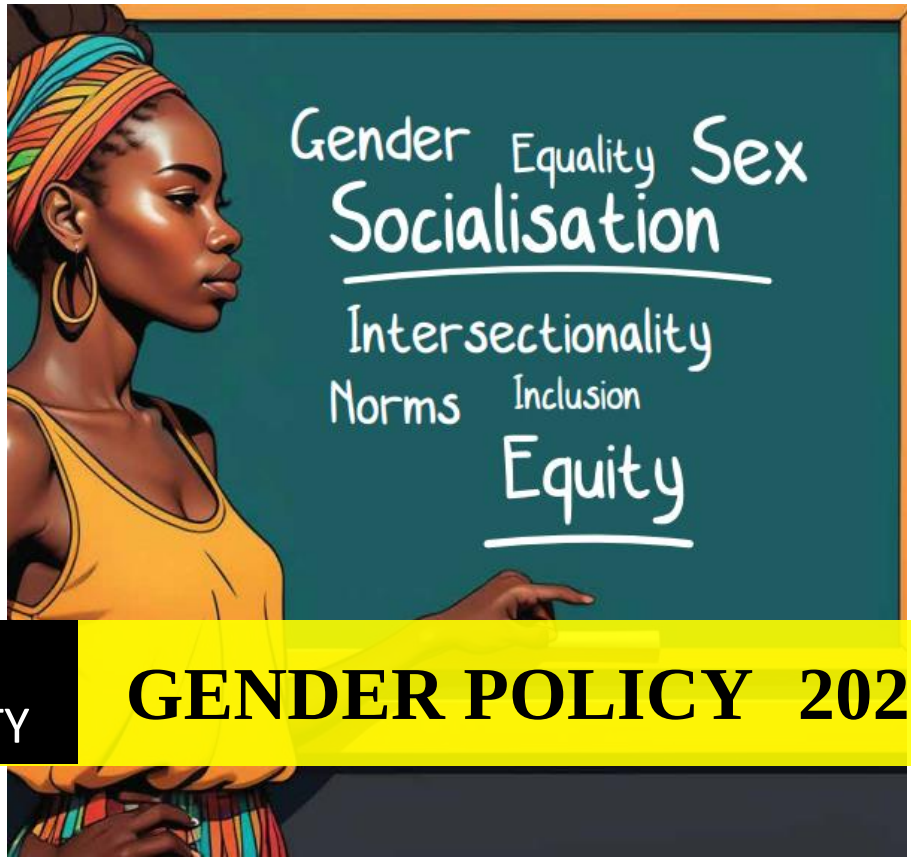
KUMI UNIVERSITY



GENDER POLICY 2024-2029

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Official Approval

Confirmed on this day ……6th……..of ……February…… 20……25……..

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His Lordship Justice Ajiji Alex Mackay
Chairperson
Kumi University Council

Signed on this day……7th……of ……February…… 20……25……

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Prof. Jong-In Hong
Vice Chancellor,
Kumi University

A Word from Chairman of University Council

Kumi University was established to address the socioeconomic challenges that were posed by war, cattle rustling and insurgency in the Teso sub region. I am happy that the University has surpassed numerous challenges including the COVID 19 pandemic and is in a position to acquire a Charter status.

The University Council is fully committed to provision of good quality, credible education and services as a world class higher education institution in Uganda and the region. We fully support the Government of Uganda's international commitments such as the United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal # 4 to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"*. Uganda is also a signatory to the African Union's declaration for provision of quality education as a requisite for achievement of the Africa Vision 2063.

Uganda's vision 2040 commits government to provide education as a human right. The privatization and liberalization policies have widened access to quality education by enlisting the participation of private actors like Kumi University. Good quality, accessible and affordable education has also been consistently underscored by the National Development Plans (NDPs, I - IV). The University remains compliant with the regulatory functions of the NCHE as well as the 2008 Education Act for the delivery of a high level quality and affordable education service, and; guidelines for professional and ethical conduct of our personnel.

As a Christian founded, private Higher Education Institution, Kumi University seeks to contribute to these national aspirations and yet remain relevant to the needs of local communities in the Teso sub region. These policies are a welcome step for ensuring that admissions, teaching and learning processes, assessments, research, and stakeholder engagements are well aligned with the NCHE regulations, standards and guidelines. The University Council remains committed to providing all the support required to facilitate professional best practices in the University.

For God and my Country

His Lordship Ajiji Alex Mackay

Chairman, Kumi University Council

Forward by the Vice Chancellor

Kumi University is a private higher education institution in Uganda licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sports since 2004 and is in advanced stages of acquiring a Charter status. As a Christian faith-based institution, we are committed to academic excellence and nurturing servant leaders through integrity, and the spirit of service by emphasizing character development and mentorship in dormitory-based community life experience.

The University promotes community engagement through service-learning to address societal challenges and ensures that community service is a core curriculum requirement. Kumi University also remains a global player in research and innovation by promoting international collaborations, student exchange, and partnerships with institutions in Korea, Japan, and the U.S. We will endeavor to upgrade the infrastructure, including classroom renovations, dormitories, a modern library, and online learning facilities.

Policy development is another indicator that Kumi University is fully compliant to supervision and guidance by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) under the UOTIA cap 262. Regulation 9 of Statutory Instrument 34 of 2008 (QAR) requires institutions to develop quality assurance systems.

This policy will promote gender sensitive programming in the University and ensure equitable representation of women and men in leadership roles. The policy will stem some workplace vices such as sexual harassment by creating safe spaces for women and men.

The policy is intended to promote a culture of collegiality, equal rights and mutual respect including recommendations for affirmative action where necessary. It is my hope that this policy will further help the University to align itself to the NCHE regulations and standards.

Prof. Jong-In Hong
Vice Chancellor

List of Acronyms

GBV	Gender Based Violence
SGN	Strategic Gender Needs

SECTION ONE

1.0 Introduction

Kumi University is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable academic environment that promotes the rights, dignity, and opportunities of all individuals, regardless of gender. Recognizing the pivotal role that gender equality plays in shaping a fair and productive society, this Gender Policy is therefore designed to create a campus atmosphere where all members, both administrators, staff and students, can thrive without discrimination or bias.

1.2 Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that gender equity is woven into every aspect of the University's operations, from recruitment and student admissions to teaching and learning, Research, community engagement and institutional governance. Kumi University believes that gender equality is essential for academic success, personal development, and the advancement of social justice. Through upholding gender equality principles, the University aspires to provide a supportive, respectful, and safe space for everyone, ensuring that gender does not limit an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from academic, professional, and social opportunities.

1.2 Scope

The Kumi University Gender Policy shall apply to all individuals within the university community, including students, Academic and non-academic staff, visitors, External Partners and Collaborators.

1.3 Commitment

Kumi University is fully commit to promoting gender equality and empowering individuals of all gender identities; men, women, youth, elderly and persons with disabilities. The University shall ensure creating an inclusive, safe, and respectful environment where everyone, regardless of gender, has equal access to opportunities, resources, and leadership roles. The University is dedicated to eliminating gender-based discrimination, fostering awareness, and providing support services that respect and affirm all gender identities, ensuring that every member of our community can thrive and succeed without fear of bias or violence.

1.4 Vision

A World class holistic centre for Quality, community tailored Education and Research

1.5 Mission

To promote gender equality and ensure equal opportunities for all sexes in education and employment.

1.6 Objectives

i. To promote gender equality in all aspects of university life

ii. To create an environment that encourages equal participation and representation of all sexes in academic, administrative, and extracurricular activities

iii. To prevent and address gender-based violence and sexual harassment

iv. To provide support for individuals affected by gender-based issues

1.7 Principles

i. **Equality and Equity**: Promoting equal opportunities for all genders and ensuring fair treatment in all aspects of university life.

ii. **Respect**: Fostering a culture of mutual respect and dignity for all individuals, regardless of gender.

iii. **Inclusivity**: Creating an inclusive environment where people of all genders feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.

iv. **Non-Discrimination**: Ensuring that no individual faces gender-based discrimination in education, employment, or social participation.

v. **Safety and Security**: Committing to providing a safe environment free from gender-based violence, harassment, or exploitation.

vi. **Accountability**: Holding individuals and the institution accountable for upholding gender equality and addressing gender-related issues.

1.8 Gender Committee

There shall be a gender committee. It shall be composed as follows;

i. Chairperson (from senior management)
ii. Academic Units Representatives
iii. Gender officer
iv. Students Representatives
v. Legal Officer
vi. Community Engagement Officer

vii. A Representative from the support staff
viii. Community Representative (optional but very vital {*can be an external gender expert}*)

2.9 Roles and Responsibilities of the committee

The roles and responsibilities of the committee shall be as follows;

i. Policy Development and Advocacy
ii. Gender Sensitization and Awareness
iii. Monitoring and Reporting Gender Equity Progress
iv. Student Support and Advocacy
v. Capacity Building for Committee Members
vi. Collaboration and Networking
vii. Curriculum and Academic Initiatives

1.10 Definition key concepts

Engender: Refers to the process of integrating gender perspective into policies programs and projects to promote gender equality and address gender-based disparities

Gender Equality: Ensuring equal access to opportunities and resources for all genders.

Gender equity: This means ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities for all genders.

Gender-based Violence (GBV): Any harmful act directed at an individual based on their gender.

Gender roles: These refer to the social, cultural and economic expectations associated with being male or female**.**

Gender Division of Labour- This term refers to the allocation of different tasks, responsibilities and activities to women and men in households, communities and society considered socially and culturally appropriate. Thus, gender roles arise from gender division of labour.

Gender Empowerment: This is a process of enabling women and men to take control of their lives, make informed decisions and participate fully in the society.

Gender Needs: These are requirements that arise from people's positioning in society, determined by the socially constructed attributes.

Gender responsive: Refers to the ability of an individual or agency, to take into account the social relations of women and men as well as differences in their needs in any undertaking or decision.

Gender sensitivity: This is being conscious of the different situations and needs of women and men, throughout the decision-making process. It entails the ability to recognize the differences in perception and interests between males and females arising from their different social position and different gender roles.

Intersectionality: Recognizing how gender, race, ethnicity, class, and other social categories intersect to impact individuals' experiences.

Marginalization: The situation of being left at the periphery in accessing opportunities, resources and services.

Policy: Refers to a guiding principle designed to influence decisions and actions; for its effective implementation, the principle must be supported by appropriate structures, processes, and procedures

Practical Gender Needs: These are the immediate requirements for addressing an existing problem related to socially ascribed roles and responsibilities of women and men.

Strategic Gender Needs: Refer to the long-term, transformative needs of individuals or groups that address the root causes of gender inequality and promote gender equality and empowerment

Sex: Refers to biological characteristics that make an individual male or female. Sex differences are God given, universal and unchangeable.

Sexual Harassment: This is unwelcome acts of a sexual nature that cause discomfort to the targeted person such as words, gestures, touch, suggestions, persistent request for sexual favors, coerced sexual intercourse and rape.

SECTION TWO

2.0 Thematic areas of Gender

2.1 Gender in Education

The University shall;

i. Encourage the inclusion of gender-sensitive materials in curricula and teaching methods.
ii. Ensure equal access to education for students of all sexes, addressing barriers to entry and retention, especially for female students.
iii. Promote research on gender issues and encourage gender-responsive research across disciplines.

2.2 Gender in Employment

The University shall;

i. Ensure that hiring, promotion, and career advancement processes are free from gender bias.
ii. Ensure equal representation and participation of both women and men in all aspects of the university
iii. Promote work-Life Balance Support
iv. Promote gender parity in leadership roles, committees, and decision-making bodies.

2.3 Gender in research

The University shall;

i. Ensure gender equity in Research through education and awareness
ii. Foster Gender Equity in Research Career Advancement
iii. Ensure Equal Access to Research Funding
iv. Encourage gender responsive Research design, Evaluation and dissemination processes

2.4 Gender in community engagement

The University shall;

i. Ensure inclusive Outreach and Invitations
ii. Target Engagement with Underrepresented Groups

iii. Promote Gender-Sensitive Communication by using Gender-inclusive Language
iv. Integrate Gender Analysis into Community Projects

2.5 Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment Prevention

The University shall;

i. Offer a clear statement against gender-based violence and sexual harassment.
ii. Devise strategies for raising awareness, providing training, and creating a culture of respect and non-violence.
iii. Establish confidential, accessible channels for reporting incidents of gender-based violence or sexual harassment.
iv. Provide access to counseling, legal advice, and medical services for survivors of gender-based violence.
v. Provide clear procedures for addressing complaints, including disciplinary actions for perpetrators

2.6 Gender and Mentorship

The University shall;

i. Establish specific mentorship and gender sensitive and responsive guidelines
ii. Providing mentees with gender sensitive guidance, advice and feedback from mentors
iii. Design and implement a gender-responsive cross generational leadership and mentoring programmes, particularly for young female staff in the science disciplines to change people's perceptions and beliefs which happens incrementally over long periods of time
iv. Promote role modeling with gender sensitivity and responsiveness
v. Enhance flexibility and understanding of other genders' perspectives
vi. Engender monitoring and evaluation of the results of the mentorship programs at the university with a gender lens

2.5 Gender and Diversity

The University shall;

i. Establish a gender office to offer support and guidance for male and female students and staff.
ii. Develop mentorship programs to support women and girls' participation in academia and leadership.

iii. Organize workshops, seminars, and campaigns to increase awareness of gender issues.

2.6 Gender equity planning and budgeting

i. Allot budgetary resources, on the basis of a well-clarified proportion, for funding gender mainstreaming progressions in all the core functions of the University.
ii. Establish guidelines and implement a gender equity budgeting training programme for all key staff involved in university planning and budgeting processes.
iii. Establish a mechanism for financial accountability for resources allocated for gender mainstreaming.
iv. Establish and maintain a gender perspective at various stages like programme and policy formulations, assessment of the needs of target groups, review of the existing policies and guidelines, allocation of resources, implementation of programmes, impact assessment, reprioritization of resources.

2.7 Implementation and Monitoring

The University shall;

i. Develop a detailed plan for implementing the policy, including timelines, responsibilities, and resources required.
ii. Create mechanisms to monitor the policy's effectiveness and impact, including regular reviews and feedback from stakeholders.
iii. Ensure transparency in the implementation of the policy and hold relevant university bodies accountable for enforcing it.

SECTION THREE

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The following shall be the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders:

3.1 The Vice Chancellor

He or She shall;

i. Provide leadership in promoting gender equality across the university and advocate for the gender policy at all levels of the institution.

ii. Ensure the effective implementation of the gender policy by overseeing its application in academic, administrative, and social activities within the university.
iii. Allocate the necessary resources (financial, human, and infrastructural) to support gender equality initiatives and ensure the policy is carried out effectively.
iv. Monitor progress towards achieving gender equality goals, evaluating the effectiveness of the policy, and making necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.
v. Lead efforts to raise awareness about gender issues within the university community and ensuring that all staff, students, and stakeholders understand the importance of the gender policy.
vi. Promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment free from gender-based violence and discrimination by enforcing the policy's provisions and addressing violations promptly.
vii. Collaborate with faculty, staff, student organizations, and external partners to ensure the successful integration of the gender policy into all university activities.
viii. Report on the progress of gender equity initiatives to university governing bodies and ensuring that accountability measures are in place for the implementation of the gender policy.

3.2 Heads of Academic Units

Heads of Academic Units shall;

i. Ensure that the gender policy is effectively implemented within their respective faculties. They should oversee the integration of gender equality principles into the curriculum, teaching practices, and faculty operations.
ii. Lead efforts to raise awareness about gender issues among staff members and students, encouraging discussions and initiatives that promote gender equality and inclusivity.
iii. Ensure that the curriculum and teaching materials are gender-sensitive and free from bias, while also promoting gender studies and topics related to gender equality.
iv. Encourage academic staff and students to engage in research that addresses gender issues and promotes gender equality in academia and beyond.
v. Monitor the implementation of the gender policy within their faculties and report progress to the university leadership, highlighting any challenges and successes.

vi. Ensure that gender equity initiatives are adequately resourced and that academic units' members have the support they need to implement the policy effectively.
vii. Ensure that recruitment, promotions, and professional development opportunities in these academic units are gender-neutral and based on merit, providing equal opportunities for all genders.
viii. Report any gender-based discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence cases which they may not handle at their level

3.3 Academic Staff

Academic staff shall;

i. Ensure that their teaching methods are inclusive, fostering an environment where all students, regardless of gender, feel valued and supported. This includes using gender-neutral language and ensuring the classroom is a safe space for all.
ii. Provide mentorship and academic support to students of all genders, promoting their success, and ensuring that gender biases do not hinder academic progression.
iii. Promote discussions and raising awareness about gender-related issues, both inside and outside the classroom, helping to create a culture of respect and understanding.
iv. Ensure that assessments and evaluations are fair and do not discriminate against students based on gender. Academic staff should work towards reducing bias in grading and ensure equal opportunities for all students to succeed.
v. Serve as role models by demonstrating respect for gender equality in their interactions with students and colleagues, reinforcing the values of the gender policy.
vi. Participate in or leading initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality within the academic environment, such as workshops, seminars, or research projects on gender issues.
vii. Be responsible for reporting any instances of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to address such incidents.

3.4 Students

Students shall;

i. Be educated about the policy, report violations, and contribute to a gender-sensitive campus culture.

ii. Actively participate in discussions, workshops, and seminars related to gender issues. This helps raise awareness and encourages a deeper understanding of gender equality.
iii. Challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination both in the classroom and in social settings, promoting respect for diversity and gender inclusivity.
iv. Be responsible for fostering an inclusive and respectful environment by treating their peers and faculty members with dignity, regardless of gender.
v. Be mindful of their language, using gender-neutral terms and respecting individuals' preferred pronouns and identities.
vi. Report any cases of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence they witness or experience, ensuring that these issues are addressed according to university policies.
vii. Support to peers who may be victims of gender-based violence or discrimination, ensuring they are aware of available resources and assistance.
viii. Actively participate in or organize events, campaigns, and student groups that focus on promoting gender equality, diversity, and inclusion.
ix. Engage in research, discussions, and projects related to gender equality, helping to further the university's goals of a more inclusive academic and social environment.
x. Adhere to the university's gender policy by upholding its principles of equality, respect, and non-discrimination in all their interactions on campus.
xi. Take leadership roles in student organizations, ensuring that gender equity is incorporated into their activities and that all genders have equal access to leadership opportunities.
xii. Ensure that gender diversity is represented in student governance bodies, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered.
xiii. Model inclusive behavior in their interactions, showing respect for all genders and promoting a positive, non-discriminatory environment across the campus.
xiv. Engage in discussions that encourage mutual respect, understanding, and the reduction of gender biases in all aspects of university life.

3.5 Gender Officer/Gender Focal personnel

A dedicated office or individual responsible for implementing the policy and supporting all gender equality initiatives.

The University shall;

i. Ensure the effective implementation of the university's gender policy across all departments, faculties, and administrative units.

ii. Regularly monitor and evaluate the progress of gender equality initiatives, ensuring that the policy is being adhered to and identifying areas where improvement is needed.
iii. Providing Support and Counseling by offering confidential counseling and support services to students and staff affected by gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence. Further, Referring victims of gender-based violence or discrimination to appropriate legal or psychological support services.
iv. Run campaigns, workshops, and seminars to raise awareness about gender equality, gender-based violence, and the university's gender policy.
v. Organize training sessions for faculty, staff, and students to enhance their understanding of gender issues and provide practical tools for promoting gender equality in daily interactions.
vi. Advise university leadership, faculty deans, and staff on gender-related issues, including best practices for promoting gender equality within academic and administrative environments.
vii. Provide guidance on how to integrate gender-sensitive approaches in curricula, research, recruitment, and decision-making processes.
viii. Ensure that gender equality principles are integrated into all aspects of university life, including teaching methods, research, recruitment, and faculty development.
ix. Promote safe and inclusive spaces for all genders, free from harassment and discrimination, and ensuring that these spaces are accessible to everyone in the university community.
x. Manage complaints related to gender discrimination, harassment, and violence, ensuring that they are addressed in a timely, confidential, and fair manner.
xi. Act as a mediator in cases where gender-based conflicts or disputes arise, promoting peaceful and equitable resolutions.
xii. Collect and analyze data related to gender disparities in areas such as enrollment, academic performance, staff representation, and career progression.
xiii. Engage in or supporting research on gender issues to inform university policies and practices, ensuring that gender-related challenges are addressed through evidence-based approaches.
xiv. Collaborate with internal university stakeholders (such as faculty, student groups, and administrative units) and external partners (such as government bodies, NGOs, and gender-focused organizations) to advance gender equality initiatives.
xv. Establish networks with other universities, gender-focused organizations, and international bodies to share knowledge, resources, and best practices in gender equality.

xvi. Monitor compliance with the gender policy across all university departments and ensuring that actions are taken to address any violations or lapses in gender equality practices.

xvii. Prepare regular reports on gender equality progress and challenges to be presented to university leadership, governing bodies, and relevant external organizations.

xviii. Advocate for the rights of underrepresented or marginalized genders within the university and working to promote policies that further gender equality in all areas of academic and administrative life.

xix. Advise on the development, revision, and strengthening of the university's gender policy and other related documents to ensure they reflect current gender equality standards and best practices.

SECTION FOUR

4.0 Funding and Resources

The University shall mobilize the resources from the following;

i. Government Funding Programs
ii. International Organizations and Donors
iii. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Foundations
iv. Academic and Research Grants
v. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
vi. University Partnerships and International Collaboration
vii. Local and Community-Based Organizations
Viii. University and Alumni funds

Henceforth, Kumi University reaffirms its obligation to ensuring gender equality across all thematic areas of its operations by integrating gender-sensitive policies, practices, and programs that promote equal access, participation, and opportunities for all.

Policy Review

This policy shall undergo a review every three years or sooner if necessary, to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Specific circumstances that may trigger a review include:

1. **Conflict with other policies:** Ensuring alignment and consistency within the University's regulatory framework.
2. **Need for amendments:** Addressing changes that enhance service delivery or adapt to evolving institutional needs.
3. **Other identified reasons:** As determined by the University Administration or the Public Relations and Communications Committee to better serve the institution's goals.
4. Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains robust, responsive, and reflective of KUMU's mission and aspirations.