



Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy

1.0 Introduction

The School of Higher Education (SHEL) is deeply committed to providing equal opportunities to all individuals, both in student admissions and staff recruitment, fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for learning and employment. We uphold the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion across all facets of the institution, ensuring that no individual is discriminated against based on gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other characteristic protected by law.

This policy governs the admissions process for prospective students and the recruitment, selection, and hiring of staff members, ensuring that both are free from bias and discrimination.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to:

- **Student Admissions:** All prospective students applying to SHEL, regardless of their educational background, race, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or financial status.
- **Staff Recruitment:** All individuals applying for employment at SHEL, including both academic and administrative positions, across all levels and departments.
- **External Contractors and Service Providers:** All external organizations and individuals providing services or products to SHEL, including but not limited to contractors, consultants, vendors, suppliers, and other third-party service providers.

The policy ensures that both student admissions, staff recruitment, and procurements are conducted fairly, impartially, and based on merit.

3.0 Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination refers to any unjust or prejudicial treatment based on personal characteristics such as:

- **Direct discrimination:** Unequal treatment based on sex, age, race, disability, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital status.

- **Indirect discrimination:** Policies or practices that disadvantage a group of individuals with a specific characteristic, unless justifiable.

Examples of Indirect Discrimination include:

- Setting unnecessary criteria (e.g., a fixed age range or excessive experience requirements)
- Requiring qualifications unrelated to the essential functions of the job
- Limiting training opportunities to full-time staff only

SHEL recognizes that any form of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is unacceptable and aims to eliminate such practices in all areas of student admissions and staff recruitment.

4.0 Policy Statement

- **Student Admissions:** SHEL is committed to offering equal access to all prospective students, ensuring that decisions are made based on academic potential, qualifications, and merit, without regard to personal characteristics such as race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or financial background.
- **Staff Recruitment:** SHEL is committed to recruiting the best talent based on merit, skills, qualifications, and potential. The recruitment process will be fair, transparent, and free from discrimination, ensuring that all candidates, regardless of their background, have an equal opportunity to join the institution.
- **Contractors and Service Providers:** SHEL will ensure that the selection of contractors and service providers is conducted in a fair and transparent manner. All external engagements will be based on merit, capability, and alignment with SHEL's values of equality, inclusion, and diversity.

5.0 Admissions and Recruitment Process

5.1 Student Admissions

- All applicants will be assessed based on their **academic qualifications** and **merit** for the chosen program. Admission decisions will not be influenced by race, gender, age, disability, or financial background unless there is a legitimate need (e.g., a financial aid program).
- **Application and Registration:**
 - Admission criteria will be communicated clearly and fairly.

- All applicants will have equal access to application resources, including financial support, career counseling, and accommodations for students with disabilities.
- **Assessment and Selection:**
 - Evaluation will focus on an applicant's academic abilities and potential, ensuring that no student is disadvantaged by irrelevant criteria.
 - Where interviews are part of the process, they will be conducted impartially, with questions directly related to the applicant's qualifications and suitability for the program.

5.2 Staff Recruitment

- **Job Advertisements:** All job openings will be advertised clearly, with sufficient details about the role and its requirements. Advertisements will not imply a preference for any particular group unless it is a **genuine occupational requirement** (in accordance with relevant laws).
- **Recruitment Process:**
 - Recruitment will be based on **merit**, and all candidates will be assessed against clear, transparent criteria that are relevant to the role.
 - The hiring process will ensure that decisions are made solely on **qualifications, experience, and potential**, without consideration of irrelevant factors such as gender, race, sexual orientation, or disability unless legally justified.
- **Interviews:**
 - Interviews will be conducted fairly, focusing on the candidate's suitability for the job.
 - All candidates will be asked the same questions relevant to the role, and decisions will be based on performance rather than personal characteristics.
- **Selection and Hiring:**
 - Selection will be made on the basis of **fit for the role and merit**.
 - Once hired, staff members will have equal opportunities for **training, career advancement, and professional development**, based solely on performance.

5.3 Contractor and Service Provider Selection

- **Open and Transparent Bidding:** SHEL will ensure that all contractors and service providers are selected through an open, transparent, and competitive bidding process.

- **Non-Discriminatory Evaluation:** Contractors and service providers will be evaluated based on their ability to meet SHEL's needs, including their qualifications, experience, value for money, and commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- **Diversity Criteria:** SHEL may consider a contractor or service provider's commitment to diversity and equal opportunity as part of the evaluation process, alongside other technical and financial factors.
- **Fair Contract Terms:** All contracts will include provisions to ensure that contractors and service providers adhere to SHEL's equal opportunity standards, including non-discriminatory practices in their own hiring and operational policies.

6.0 Special Considerations

6.1 Financial Aid for Students

- SHEL is committed to making education accessible to all students, regardless of their financial status. Scholarships, grants, and financial assistance programs will be available to help students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds pursue their studies.

6.2 Support for Students with Disabilities

- Reasonable accommodations will be made during the admissions process to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the application and enrollment process.
- Applicants with disabilities who require specific adjustments will be provided with the necessary support to ensure a fair and inclusive process.

6.3 Support for Employees with Disabilities

- SHEL will provide reasonable accommodations during the recruitment and employment process to ensure that employees with disabilities have equal opportunities.
- Employees who become disabled during their employment will be supported with the necessary adjustments to ensure their ongoing success in the workplace.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

- SHEL will regularly review its **admissions and recruitment processes** to ensure compliance with this Equal Opportunity Policy.
- The **Human Resources Department** and **Admissions Office** will work together to monitor for any patterns of discrimination or barriers to equality.
- Any discriminatory practices identified will be addressed immediately through appropriate action.

8.0 Grievances and Complaints

- Any student or staff member who believes they have been subjected to discrimination during the admissions or recruitment process is encouraged to report the issue using the **Academic and Non-Academic Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure**.
- All complaints will be investigated thoroughly, and corrective action will be taken as necessary to prevent recurrence.

9.0 Policy Enforcement

- **Accountability:** All staff, students, and contractors are expected to adhere to the principles of this policy. Disciplinary action may be taken against any individual or organization found to be in violation of this policy.

10.0 Approval

Title:	Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy
Current Status:	Version 3
Approved by Board of Directors	Yes
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Next Review Date:	As necessary