

1. Policy Statement

The principle of equality is enshrined in the University of Benin Statute. In 1973, the Governing Body of University of Benin formally adopted an *Equal Opportunities Employment Policy* to give effect to this principle in the employment policies and practices of the University.

The University now pledges itself to continue to uphold this principle by promoting the continued development of academic, employment and other policies, procedures and practices which do not discriminate unfairly on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the traveller community. The University will continue to implement positive action programmes, to remove barriers to equality and promote concepts of diversity and equality of opportunity in all of its activities.

The University will work to eliminate unfair discrimination, redress imbalances and foster an ethos of equality and will continue to develop guidelines and codes of practice which will underline its commitment to the principle of equality.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote equality of opportunity for staff and students by ensuring that all academic, employment and other practices operate on the basis of the appropriate merits, qualifications, abilities and potential of individuals.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the policy are –

- To ensure that all applicants for employment in the University are treated fairly on the basis of their merits, abilities, qualifications and suitability for appointment and that appointment procedures do not discriminate on the basis of criteria which cannot be justified by the demands of the post.
- To ensure that all employees of the University are trained, appraised, given access to relevant work experience, promoted, and otherwise treated on the basis of their relevant merits, qualifications, abilities and experience.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities as teachers, examiners, officers, managers, employees, and representatives of the University under the provisions of national legislation and the policies of the University.
- To monitor and review employment policies and practices to ensure that they do not, directly or indirectly, discriminate unfairly against individual members of staff or particular groups of staff.
- To ensure that applicants for admission as students of the University are treated fairly and in accordance with published policies and procedures.
- To ensure that the University affords all students an equal opportunity to develop their full potential; the policies, procedures and practices of the University in relation to teaching, learning and examining will seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all students and, as far as is practicable, practices will conform with the published procedures of the University.
- To promote a harmonious working environment for staff and students based on mutual respect within which staff and students are encouraged to develop their full potential in the interests of the individual and the University.

- To identify programmes of positive action within which these objectives can be achieved.

4. Responsibilities of the University as an Employer

The Governing Council is responsible for the management and control of all the activities of the University, subject to the provisions of the University statutes and regulations.

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that all employment policies and practices of the University reflect the provisions of national legislation and of the University's charter, statutes, regulations and policies.

The Registrar is also responsible for the design, development, implementation and review of progressive HR policies and practices, including the introduction of positive measures to achieve specific objectives in relation to equal opportunities. It will have particular responsibility for implementing these policies and practices and for monitoring their effectiveness. The Registrar will also ensure that statistical data is provided, as required, to permit the effectiveness of these policies to be monitored.

All staff who have responsibility for the management or supervision of other staff have a particular responsibility for promoting equality of opportunity and a harmonious working environment and for ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented.

University of Benin makes the following commitments to ensure the effectiveness of its policy on equality –

- To ensure that this policy is made known to all employees.
- To consult with staff and the trade unions representing staff, where appropriate and practicable, on issues relating to equal opportunities and to encourage the involvement and commitment of the University community to the promotion of equal opportunities.
- To provide information and training to enable staff to understand their responsibilities as set out in this policy, and as required by national legislation, and to provide support and guidance to enable staff to discharge these responsibilities.
- To review employment procedures and practices regularly to ensure that they continue to reflect and promote the University's policy on equal opportunities.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy and identify areas for action.
- To identify, develop and support positive action measures to ensure that all members of staff have an equal opportunity, and, where appropriate, encouragement, to obtain employment, promotion, and further education and training for personal and career development.
- To establish appropriate mechanisms whereby staff or job applicants who feel that they have been unfairly treated can have their complaints investigated.

University of Benin will produce, and periodically review, guidelines and codes of practice on specific activities in order to ensure that practices throughout the University reflect the principles of this policy. Guidelines and codes of practice will apply to areas such as recruitment and selection, training and development, terms and conditions of employment of staff, flexible and work-life balance policies, unbiased

language, sexual harassment and bullying, and employment of persons with disabilities.

The University has established, and will review, mechanisms and procedures within which claims of unfair discrimination or harassment can be investigated and resolved.

4.1 Responsibilities of Staff

Individual members of the staff of the University have responsibilities as set out in this policy and in national legislation to avoid unfair discrimination against individuals or particular groups.

In particular, members of the staff –

- Should promote equal opportunities for staff and students, should recognise and respect the rights of other members of the University community, and should contribute to the development of a harmonious environment for staff and students.
- Are required to co-operate with any measures introduced by the University to promote equal opportunities for staff or students.
- Must not, either directly or indirectly, discriminate unfairly against fellow employees, students or applicants for employment or admission.
- Must not prevail upon management, trade unions, colleagues or students to practice unfair discrimination or to act in a way which is contrary to the spirit of this policy.

5. Responsibilities of the University to Students

University of Benin will seek to ensure that all students of the University are treated fairly and are afforded equal opportunities to develop their potential for learning and for personal development and will promote an environment which supports learning, where staff and students recognise and respect the rights of others, and which is free from harassment or bullying.

The Governing Authority, Academic Council, and the Colleges are responsible for the development, approval and publication of academic regulations, procedures and practice in relation to the admission of students and to teaching, learning and assessment, and they will seek to ensure that such regulations, procedures and practices promote equal opportunities for all applicants and students and do not unfairly discriminate against individuals or particular groups of individuals.

The Colleges and individual members of staff will ensure that, as far as practicable, academic practices conform to the published regulations and procedures of the University and do not discriminate unfairly against individual student or groups of students.

The Governing Authority and the are responsible for developing a code of behaviour for students and for the maintenance of discipline and good order and they will seek to ensure that the student code is observed and that disciplinary procedures are implemented with fairness and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

The is responsible for the recognition of Student Societies and it will seek to ensure that membership of all Societies is open to all students and that Societies conduct their

activities in accordance with the provisions of the University Statutes.

The Student Affairs Unit is responsible for Student Clubs and it will seek to ensure that all Clubs conduct their activities in accordance with the provisions of the University Statutes and in a manner which provides all students with equal opportunities to fulfil their potential.

The Registrar is responsible for the allocation of resources to student Clubs and Societies and will seek to ensure that the allocation is fair and in accordance with the principles of this policy.

The welfare of students is a matter of concern to all members of the University community, particularly the welfare of students who may have academic, personal, medical or financial difficulties. As far as resources permit, the Governing Authority will appoint sufficient numbers of staff who are qualified to provide professional advice and support for students in difficulty.

The Registrar will bring this policy to the attention of students and will publish it annually in the *Student Information Handbook*.

5.1 Responsibilities of Students

The Student Code of University of Benin defines *any act or omission which affects adversely the rights of any other member of the academic community* as a breach of discipline. The Code specifically defines *sexual harassment of any student or member of the staff of the University* as an offence.

In accordance with the provisions of the Code and the principles of this policy, all students have a responsibility to respect the rights of staff and of other students, to promote equality of opportunity, and to contribute to the creation of an environment which is harmonious and free from unfair discrimination and harassment.

In particular, students have the following responsibilities –

- To observe the provisions of the Student Code, and the regulations of the University which are designed to promote fairness and integrity.
- As Officers and members of the Students Union, to ensure that the policies and practices of the Union comply with the provisions of the University Statutes and to ensure that in elections to representative positions in the Union and on University bodies, all students have an equal right to vote and to stand as candidates.
- As Officers and members of Clubs and Societies, to ensure that the policies and practices of the Clubs and Societies comply with the provisions of the University Statutes, and do not discriminate unfairly against individual students or particular groups of students; to ensure that the posters and other publications of the Clubs and Societies do not contain words or images which are intimidatory or offensive to other members of the University community and that they conform to the norms of good taste.

6. Access to the University

University of Benin, in selecting applicants for admission to its courses and programmes, will observe the principles of equity and constitutional justice and will

avoid unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, age, social background or other irrelevant considerations. In implementing its admissions policy, the University will seek to eliminate barriers to participation, to redress under-representation of the socially and economically disadvantaged and to promote equality of opportunity.

It is the policy of the University, as far as is practicable, to admit all applicants who fulfil the minimum academic requirements for its courses and programmes. Recognising, however, that the resources available to the University may limit the number of places available in each programme, the University will allocate the places available in a fair manner, in accordance with published regulations, procedures and criteria and, in the case of admission to the first year of undergraduate programmes, with such agreements as are for the time being in place between the University and the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board (JAMB)

Notwithstanding this, but recognising the particular circumstances which may attach to the educational achievements of applicants with physical, sensory or learning disabilities, of mature applicants and of applicants who are socially and educationally disadvantaged, the University reserves the right to admit such applicants on special programmes designed to overcome barriers to participation in University education and to promote equality of opportunity.

In particular –

- University of Benin welcomes applications from students with disabilities and provides a range of services which is designed to assist them to achieve their full academic potential. Applicants whose disability has prevented them from fulfilling their full potential at second level but who are adjudged to have the ability to benefit from study at the University will be admitted without meeting the normal entry criteria.
- The University will ensure that the design of all new buildings and facilities will render them accessible to persons with disabilities and, as far as resources permit, will carry out such alterations to existing buildings and facilities as are required to make them accessible to all users.
- The University, as far as resources permit, will continue to admit mature applicants who do not meet the normal entry or matriculation criteria to full-time undergraduate programmes on the basis of demonstrable academic aptitude.
- University of Benin is committed to the concept of ***Lifelong Learning*** and has a proud record of providing degree programmes and other courses which are designed to meet the needs of adult and part-time students. The University will continue to develop and support part-time undergraduate degree programmes and other accredited courses within its adult and continuing education programmes.
- University of Benin recognises the qualifications and awards of other third level institutions in the state which are partly or wholly funded by the Ministry of Education, and, as far as resources permit, will admit applicants with such qualifications to the undergraduate programmes of the University and will recognise, for the purpose of exemptions, the courses attended at these institutions, subject to comparability of content and standard with the courses of University of Benin.