



SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY

GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY

Approved by the University Council

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Date

Definition of terms	4
Vision, Mission, Motto and core values of the university	5
Forward	6
Preface	7
1. Preliminaries	8
(1) Introduction	8
(2) Legal and Policy Framework.....	9
(3) Situational Analysis.....	10
(4) Goals and objectives.....	10
(a) Goals	10
(b) General Objectives.....	11
(5) Justification.....	11
(6) Scope.....	12
(7) Guiding Principles.....	12
2. The Core Components of the policy.....	12
(1) Gender in the University Governance and Management.....	12
(2) Staff Recruitment, Promotion, Development and Retention	13
(3) Student Enrolment, Retention and Completion of Studies	14
(4) Gender Equity in Participation and Performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	14
(5) Gender- responsive Learning and Work Environments.....	15
(6) Prevention of Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harassment	15
(7) Gender, HIV and AIDS.....	16
(8) Gender-responsive Research	17
(9) Information and Communication Technology in Gender and Education.....	17
(11) Development of University Gender Sensitive Curricular.....	18
(12) Policy implementation framework.....	19
3. Review of the Policy	20
4. References	20

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASALs	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRS	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EFA	Education for All
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoK	Government of Kenya
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information, Communication Technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHEST	Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisations
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SEKU	South Eastern Kenya University
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNESCO	United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Definition of terms

Affirmative Action	Action taken on a temporary basis in favour of a disadvantaged group so as to enhance equity
Empowerment	A process through which men, women, boys and girls acquire knowledge and skills, and develop attitudes to critically analyse their situations and take appropriate action to improve their status or that of the marginalised groups in society
Engender	Refers to the socially determined power relations, roles, responsibilities and entitlements for men and women, boys and girls
Gender discrimination	Refers to unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on their gender that results into reduced access to or control of resources and opportunities
Gender equality	Refers to equal treatment of women and men, boys and girls so that they can enjoy the benefits of development including equal access to and control of opportunities and resources
Gender equity	refers to the practice of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, access to and control of resources, responsibilities, power, opportunities and services. It is essentially, elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender
Gender Mainstreaming	This is the consistent integration of gender concerns into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans, programmes, activities and projects, at all levels
Gender responsive	Refers to actions taken that eliminate gender imbalances
Gender-responsive pedagogy	Refers to teaching and learning methodologies, and classroom practices that take gender into consideration
Gender-based violence	Refers to violence meted out to people belonging to a given gender

Vision, Mission, Motto and core values of the university

Vision

To be a globally competitive centre of excellence in teaching, research, innovation and Service.

Mission

To provide quality education through teaching, research, extension, innovation and entrepreneurship with emphasis on dryland agriculture, natural resources and environmental management.

Philosophy

Arid to Green

Core Values

Professionalism

Innovation

Integrity

Freedom of thought

Teamwork

Respect for and Conservation of the Environment

Forward

The promotion of Gender equity is at the heart of forward looking corporate and public institutions and SEKU is no exception. Despite the significant milestones achieved over the years, studies and evaluations show that inequalities between men and women within university establishments remain a great challenge. The growth and success of SEKU as an institution of higher learning will depend on how well it marshals the strengths of women and men to achieve its core mandate. The development and rolling out of this policy is the strongest indicator that SEKU wants to claim its spot on the sacred roll of gender sensitive institutions. The policy will harness the necessary support and resources to help SEKU achieve this objective. In order to bridge this objective, there is need for institutionalising gender mainstreaming at all levels SEKU from staff to students body.

I am confident that this gender mainstreaming policy will create a supportive and proactive environment where both women and men will thrive in SEKU and realise their greatest potential to both the university and community in general. I am pleased to note that enabling structures have been put in place for the implementation of the policy. Going forward, gender mainstreaming principles should inform every activity of the university.

Dr Sabah Ahmed Omar, PhD

Chairperson of the University Council

Preface

South Eastern Kenya University is committed to provide a gender sensitive learning and working environment for its students, staff and general public. SEKU has embarked on an ambitious journey of promoting gender equity and equality in the distribution of opportunities for both men and women among its students and workforce. Consequently, the University has spearheaded the development of this Gender Mainstreaming Policy to serve as a guiding document for ensuring a fair distribution of opportunities for access to education, work and to decision-making positions.

This policy therefore provides members of the SEKU community with a comprehensive framework for ensuring fairness, equity and equality for both women and men. Through this policy, the university hopes to create an enabling environment where full potential of women and men both students and staff will be realized. I therefore urge all members of the university community to familiarise themselves with the policy and support the university in its implementation. I am confident that with the implementation of this policy, the University will provide a conducive working and learning environment for all.

Finally, I wish to thank all the members of the Gender Mainstreaming Committee who made this policy possible, as well as the many individuals within SEKU who provided ideas, feedback and other inputs that sharpened this policy. I further reiterate the University's commitment and willingness to ensure the implementation of this policy.

Prof. Geoffrey M. Muluvi, PhD
Vice Chancellor

1. Preliminaries

(1) Introduction

The concept of gender mainstreaming has been defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC 1997) as: The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. In terms of efficiency, any organization has an interest in ensuring that members enjoy equal opportunities to unfold their full potential at work, regardless of their gender (Raab, 2013)

Since its official recognition as a global goal for economic growth and poverty reduction by the world community in the Charter of United Nations in 1945, gender equality has evolved over the years through confirmation by various international and regional treaties, conventions and agreements to become such a great concern today that it is the subject of many development agenda for enhancing sustainability. Gender mainstreaming also addresses the environment in which policies and programmes are developed and implemented. Thus, a strategy to integrate gender concerns into programming must be accompanied by a strategy to ensure that staff and the working environment are gender-sensitive, guaranteeing equal opportunities and treatment of men and women, boys and girls.

Education is widely recognized as the key to national development. It has been demonstrated that an increase in access and quality of education relative to the national population is critical for socio-economic growth and productivity, increased individual earnings and subsequently, reduced income inequalities and the reduction of poverty levels. It also contributes significantly to improved health, enhanced democracy, good governance and effective leadership. Attainment of gender equity and equality in education is therefore, a core development issue.

Statistics show that in the Kenyan education system, the widest gender gaps exist at the higher education levels. As a stakeholder in higher education, South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) is committed to addressing this issue at institutional level. To achieve this, the University has developed this Gender Mainstreaming Policy, which provides a comprehensive framework of the principles and strategies to be pursued in order to achieve equity and equality across the institution's overall population and work environment. In this endeavor, the University is guided by its philosophical framework embodied in the mandate, vision, mission, core values and motto stated in the Strategic Plan (2015 - 2019).

(2) Legal and Policy Framework

The Government of Kenya's commitment to attain gender equality is underlined in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 Chapter Four, Section 27, Sub-section 3 on equality and freedom from discrimination. This commitment is also reflected in various policy papers ranging from international, regional to national legal frameworks such as: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (2015); Beijing Platform for Action (1995); United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women (1993); Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1984); African Plan of Action on Gender Policy (2006); National Gender and Development Policy (2000), which proposes mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Policy, Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development, Plan of Action (2008 – 2012) to implement the National Gender and Development Policy. Further the National Policy and Gender (2019) seeks to strengthen the government resolve to promote gender equality. The University Act 2012, Part III, section 29, subsection b (i) also stresses on the promotion and preservation of equality of opportunity and access. The Kenya Vision 2030 Chapter 3 Section 3.3 promotes equity and wealth creation opportunities for all. All these documents reiterate the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination, enhance the right to education, and promote gender equality, inclusiveness and empowerment.

(3) Situational Analysis

(a) Status of Gender Equality in Institutions of Higher Education in Kenya

Research has shown that in Kenya, generally, gender disparities in favour of males dominate in post-secondary education. This is with regard to access, retention, completion, performance and transition between institutions, with the gap widening up the education ladder. It is also evident that there are immense gender disparities in the access to and performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects among institutions of higher learning.

(b) Student Enrolment at SEKU

The total student enrolment at SEKU currently stands at 8,123. Out of this, **38%** are females while **62%** are males, suggesting that, in terms of student enrolment, SEKU has achieved the one third gender rule. Nevertheless, given that in a normal population the ratio of males to females is 50:50, there is need to encourage more female student enrolment.

(c) Human Resource Establishment at SEKU

SEKU has a total staff establishment of 476 employees as at May 2021, 44.8% of whom are females and 55.2% are males. However, the ratio of males to females was significantly higher among academic staff (m:f = 63% : 37%) in comparison to those of the administrative staff (m:f = 1:1). Notably, the existing human resource gender situation is that staff establishment is male dominated at the top level. Through the implementation of this Gender Mainstreaming Policy, the University is committed to ensuring at least 30% of either gender representation at all levels.

(4) Goals and objectives

(a) Goals

The goal of this Policy is to enhance gender mainstreaming in all the operations of SEKU, by ensuring equal values are placed on the contributions of both men and women as equal partners

in the development of the institution and the country at large as well as considering their needs on basis of their gender.

(b) General Objectives

The general objective of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy is to establish mechanisms to eliminate all gender disparities at SEKU in education, training and research in relation to access, enrolment, completion, performance, transition, quality and outcomes.

© Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the policy are to:

- i. mainstream gender at the University in all policies, programmes and activities, planning, budgeting and implementation processes.
- ii. promote gender balance in participation and performance in the University curricular and research activities
- iii. advocate for strict adherence to the one-third gender rule in appointments to Management positions.
- iv. ensure that the institutional infrastructure and work environment are gender responsive.
- v. eliminate all forms of gender discrimination, sexual harassment and gender based violence from the SEKU community
- vi. establish new and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations in gender issues and education.
- vii. Sensitization of staff and students on negative traditional and customary stereotypes and sexism

(5) Justification

A gender mainstreaming policy is critical in the elimination of gender disparities and enhancement of gender equity and equality in higher education as well as in other national organisations at large through purposeful implementation of outlined interventions. SEKU is committed to developing appropriate strategies and implementing local action plans to promote gender equality and equity among its stakeholders in line with the national policy on mainstreaming gender.

(6) Scope

This Policy shall apply to all operations of SEKU including all Campuses, Directorates, Schools, Departments, Sections, Institutes, Centres and Units. Specifically, the policy addresses issues of access, equity, retention, transition, quality, financing, governance and management of the University.

(7) Guiding Principles

This Gender Mainstreaming Policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- (a) **Equity and inclusiveness:** the policy affirms the right to equitable opportunities for education and work for all, as well as in ensuring the opinions of all members of the University fraternity are taken into consideration in relation to gender-based issues.
- (b) **Affirmative action:** This will be used as a corrective too to correct for any gender imbalances among the various groups within SEKU.
- (c) **Transparency:** Information related to gender issues will be provided in easily understandable format and media, will freely be available and easily accessible by oversight authorities when and if necessary.
- (d) **Accountability:** Take responsibility for any decisions that are made that directly or indirectly affect gender.
- (e) **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Appropriate procedures and processes will be implemented that address individual gender needs of staff and students within reasonable framework.

2. The Core Components of the policy

To achieve gender equity SEKU will implement the following strategies

(1) Gender in the University Governance and Management

The University shall achieve gender equity and equality in governance and management through implementation of the following strategies:

- (a) provide policy direction and guidelines that ensure gender equity and equality in management of the University affairs
- (b) ensure gender equality in appointments to management and leadership positions at the University including student union, staff welfare associations and other bodies
- (c) institute gender-responsive management and governance structures, including appointment to University committees
- (d) strengthen modalities for gender-balanced appointment of deans, directors, chairpersons of departments and section heads
- (e) encourage and empower women to boost their self-esteem to seek management positions
- (f) use affirmative action as a strategy to enhance gender equity and equality in recruitment, training, deployment and promotion of staff
- (g) institute monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for progress and impact assessment

(2) Staff Recruitment, Promotion, Development and Retention

The university will achieve one third gender representation rule in the recruitment, development and promotion of staff through the following strategies

- (a) Promote fair representation of both women and men at all levels of management of the University
- (b) Provide gender-based mentoring programmes and interventions in areas where gender disparity has been identified
- (c) Ensure that all new staff recruitment and development programmes are fair and do not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their gender.
- (d) Implement women empowerment programmes such as affirmative action to ensure female representation in management
- (e) Institutionalise gender-responsiveness in appointments to leadership positions in the University
- (f) Encourage women to take up management and administrative positions at the University

(3) Student Enrolment, Retention and Completion of Studies

To reduce gender imbalance, the university will undertake the following strategies

- (a) Develop modalities to promote enrolment to university education by both males and females
- (b) Provide mechanisms to enhance participation of women, girls and other marginalised groups in university education
- (c) Enhance institutional capacity of the University to provide an enabling environment for enhancing quality academic performance for both male and female students
- (d) Implement affirmative action in order to address gender parities among the students
- (e) Sensitise students, parents, lecturers and the community at large to adopt positive beliefs and attitudes with regard to encouraging both females and males to pursue higher education

(4) Gender Equity in Participation and Performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

The university will achieve gender equity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines through the following strategies,

- (a) implement modalities and mechanisms to facilitate retention, participation and performance of women in STEM courses and technical professions
- (b) build capacity for STEM lecturers in the use of gender responsive pedagogy
- (c) sensitise students, parents, lecturers and other stakeholders so as to change beliefs and attitudes about females' ability in STEM
- (d) build students' confidence in STEM through implementation of programmes such as mentorship, science camps/clinics and career guidance seminars
- (e) implement affirmative action for qualified females in admission to STEM-based degree programmes
- (f) providing scholarships and bursaries for needy students, particularly girls pursuing STEM based programmes
- (g) lobby for the recognition and rewarding of high achieving students and staff in STEM

- (h) mobilise resources for STEM programmes and research with special focus on gender issues in STEM
- (i) institutionalise gender responsive monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment for STEM programmes improvement

(5) Gender- responsive Learning and Work Environments

The university will achieve a gender responsive learning and work environment by employing the following strategies:

- (a) budgetary allocation and resource mobilisation for the provision of quality and gender responsive learning and working environment
- (b) ensuring availability of gender responsive infrastructure, and equipment, including appropriate toilets and sanitary materials, disposal and recreational facilities
- (c) enhance gender sensitive pedagogy
- (d) promote gender-respectful social interactions among female and males within the University community
- (e) institute gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment programmes

(6) Prevention of Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harassment

The university will proactively prevent and eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and sexual harassment through the following strategies;

- (a) **establish modalities for dealing with sexual and gender based violence, including sexual harassment**
- (b) implement gender responsive safety and security measures and advocate stringent action against production and distribution of sexually provocative materials within the University
- (c) establish mechanisms and capacity building to establish and support anti gender violence programmes
- (d) institute follow-up programmes on female and male students who drop out of the University or are adversely affected by pregnancy and other socio-cultural barriers afflicted by gender biases

- (e) ensure implementation of re-entry and re-integration policy for student mothers and fathers adversely affected by socio-cultural factors
- (f) **institute monitoring, evaluation and accountability measures for progress and impact assessment of issues related to gender-based violence**

(7) Gender, HIV and AIDS

The University will integrate gender-sensitive approaches in the management of the HIV and AIDs to improve responsiveness of vulnerable gender groups through the following strategies

- (a) implementation the University HIV and AIDS policy
- (b) implement modalities for mitigation of the negative impact of HIV and AIDS especially on the females at individual and institutional levels
- (c) provide students and employees of the University with knowledge and skills to fight HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI's) with a view to reducing HIV and AIDS infection rate and differential impact on men and women
- (d) create awareness within the University on gender issues in HIV/AIDS and reproductive health
- (e) mobilise resources and ensure budgetary provision for HIV and AIDS prevention and care programmes with emphasis on the role of men in prevention
- (f) build capacity among the academic and supervisory staff to teach HIV and AIDS and life skills
- (g) carry out sensitization on gender roles with regard to care for the infected and affected by using human rights-based approaches
- (h) provide support and gender-responsive counselling for students and staff infected and affected by HIV and AIDS
- (i) conduct gender-responsive research on HIV and AIDS and education and use the findings to inform policy and practice
- (j) implement sensitisation and behaviour-change and adoption programmes on HIV and AIDS and other gender-related health issues

(8) Gender-responsive Research

To encourage gender-responsive research and cross-gender research collaborations among students and staff, the university will employ the following strategies,

- (a) Train academic staff to conduct gender-responsive action research in the University to enhance development of local solutions to local gender issues.
- (b) Conduct research on gender issues relating to boys gender on local livelihoods with special emphasis on ASALs.
- (c) Promote participation of staff and students in local and international gender research networks and fora for sharing and peer evaluation of research.
- (d) Mobilize resources for gender-responsive research
- (e) Implement, within the University set up, viable recommendations from gender-responsive research.

(9) Information and Communication Technology in Gender and Education

To ensure gender balance in the access and participation in ICT related courses and professions, the University shall employ the following strategies:

- (a) work with partners to increase ICT services at the University
- (b) conduct an analysis to document the status of women in ICT, and develop programmes to correct any imbalances
- (c) establish intervention mechanisms such as provision of scholarships to ensure women and girls venture into training in ICT
- (d) advocate against gender stereotyping and negative portrayal of women and/or men
- (e) promote research and encourage ICT education programmes aimed at eliminating stereotyping based on gender
- (f) develop specific programmes aimed at raising awareness on the various instruments relating to the rights and advancement of women in ICT

(11) Development of University Gender Sensitive Curricular

To promote research and encourage education programmes aimed at eliminating stereotyping based on gender, the university shall employ the following strategies:

- (a) undertake gender analysis, audit and research to ascertain educational needs.**
- (b) establish an institute for gender studies to enhance capacity to address gender education and other issues in the University.
- (c) mobilise resources to develop structures and implement gender programmes.
- (d) sensitise personnel at all levels in the University to facilitate gender mainstreaming

(12) Policy implementation framework

The policy will be implemented by the gender Mainstreaming Unit as stipulated in SEKU Statutes part IV (34).

(a) Implementation Structure

- (i) There shall be a Gender Mainstreaming and Development Unit headed by a Coordinator.
- (ii) The Coordinator shall be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the Senate from among teaching staff at the level of a Lecturer and above, and shall serve for a term of two years, renewable once upon satisfactory performance.
- (iii) There shall be a Gender Mainstreaming and Development Committee of the University whose membership shall consist of the following:
 - i. Chairman of the Committee, who shall be nominated by the Senate and appointed by the Vice-Chancellor from among the associate professors and professors of the University.
 - ii. Two representatives from the teaching staff nominated by the Senate and appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.
 - iii. Two representatives from the non-teaching staff nominated by the Senate and appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.
 - iv. Two student representatives nominated by the Student Governing Council and appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.
 - v. The Coordinator of the Unit who shall be the Secretary to the Committee.

(b) Terms of Reference for the Gender Mainstreaming Unit

- (i) To develop, implement, monitor, evaluate and review the University gender mainstreaming policy.
- (ii) To actively participate in resource mobilization including writing proposals for funding to implement the Gender Mainstreaming programmes and activities in and around the University.

- (iii) To mainstream gender in all University policies, programmes and activities.
- (iv) To advocate for increased participation of women in the governance structure of the University.
- (v) To ensure that the University community, infrastructure and work environment are gender responsive.
- (vi) To encourage and facilitate empowerment of women and men on gender issues.
- (vii) To establish and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations in gender and education.
- (viii) To undertake any other gender matters as may from time to time be referred by the University Management Board, Senate or the Council.

(c) Gender Audit and Plan of Action

After every two years the Gender mainstreaming Unit shall undertake a gender audit

3. Review of the Policy

This Policy will be reviewed after every two (2) years taking into account emerging gender-related issues and trends.

4. References

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