MUAST

MARONDERA UNIVERSITY
OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

GENDER POLICY

POLICY NO.GP/24/26

MUAST

MARONDERA UNIVERSITY
OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

TITLE	MARONDERA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY GENDER POLICY
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APPROVED BY	
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1.0 PREAMBLE

Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (MUAST) is a modern and unique institution of higher learning established through an Act of parliament [Chapter 25:29]. The University is driven by the vision to be a leading global center of excellence in the provision of technology driven sustainable green agricultural solutions". Underpinned by its unique core values: Excellence, Diversity, Innovation, Ethics, Ubuntu, Integrity and Sustainability; the University aims at producing globally acceptable and competent graduates grounded in agricultural, entrepreneurial and technological skills through excellence in teaching, research and extension services, innovation and industrialization. This policy recognises that gender equality, equity, diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination are fundamental principles for sustainable development, academic excellence, innovation and social justice. The University is committed to creating an inclusive institutional culture that promotes equal opportunities, eliminates gender-based discrimination, addresses gender imbalances, and prevents all forms of gender-based violence, sexual harassment and exploitation. This policy provides a framework for mainstreaming gender considerations into the governance, administration, teaching, learning, research, outreach programmes and institutional practices of MUAST.

The policy ensures that MUAST adheres to anti-corruption circulars, policies and measures as directed to the attention of the University by other agencies of the State. The policy shall also abide by growth, prosperity and inclusive development to the country in prompting good governance buttressed by transparency, accountability, integrity and rule of law. This policy also acknowledges the responsibility to lead by example in the fight against corruption and to ethically render services with integrity.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

2.1 **Gender:** a social and cultural construct, which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women, girls and boys, and accordingly refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women.

2.2 **Gender analysis:** a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts. It examines the relationships between females and males and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other.

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2.3 **Gender awareness:** Refers to recognition of the differences in the interests, needs and roles of women and men in society and how this results in differences in power, status and privilege. Gender awareness also signifies the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination.

2.4 **Gender balance:** means equal participation of women and men in all areas of work thereby achieving a balance in staffing patterns and creating a working environment that is conducive to a diverse workforce that improves the overall effectiveness.

2.5 **Gender discrimination:** Providing differential treatment to individuals on the grounds of their sex. This involves systemic and structural discrimination against women or men in the distribution of income, access to resources, and participation in decision-making.

2.6 **Gender equality:** is the concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realising their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to economic, social, cultural and political development.

2.7 **Gender equity:** the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls, and importantly the equality of outcomes and results. It entails fair and just treatment of both sexes that takes into account the different needs of men and women, cultural barriers and discrimination of the specific group.

2.8 **Gender-based violence (GBV):** An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between females and males.

2.9 **Gender mainstreaming:** A strategy to accelerate progress on women's and girls' rights and equality in relation to men and boys.

2.10 **Gender-sensitive monitoring:** Monitoring towards realising gender equality as its main focus.

2.11 **Gender relations:** Hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women and other marginalized groups. It also means social relationships between men and women.

2.12 **Gender stereotypes:** A set of common norms and judgments concerning the existing position of men, women and other group's norms, behaviour, motivations and needs.

2.13 **Sexual harassment**: Unwelcome, sex-based behavior that violates a person's dignity, creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

2.14 **Sexual violence:** Is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.\

2.15 **Vulnerable groups:** Includes but is not limited to boys, girls; older women and men, disabled persons, sex workers, and people living with HIV and AIDS.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

MUAST is committed to promoting gender equality, equity, inclusivity and non-discrimination in all its institutional policies, programmes, structures and activities. The University recognises that equal participation and representation of all genders are essential for academic excellence, innovation, sustainable agricultural development and social transformation. MUAST shall endeavor to create and maintain a safe, respectful and enabling environment in which all students, staff, researchers and stakeholders are treated with dignity and afforded equal opportunities in education, employment, leadership, research, training and professional development. The University adopts a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse and all forms of gender-based violence. The University further commits itself to mainstreaming gender considerations into teaching, learning, research, innovation, agricultural extension, community engagement and institutional governance. Through this policy, MUAST seeks to address historical and structural gender inequalities, promote balanced participation in decision-making processes, and ensure that institutional systems and practices contribute towards empowerment, fairness, human rights and sustainable development.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

4.1 Eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination in employment, education, leadership, research and service delivery.

4.2 Ensure equal access to opportunities for recruitment, training, promotion, scholarships, leadership and professional development for all genders.

4.3 Increase participation and representation of women and vulnerable groups in decision-making and leadership positions within the University.

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4.4 Promote gender-responsive curricula, research and innovation that contribute to sustainable agricultural development and social transformation.

4.5 Support vulnerable and disadvantaged groups through equitable institutional policies and support systems.

4.6 Encourage the collection, analysis and utilisation of gender-disaggregated data for informed planning, policy formulation and decision-making.

4.7 Foster partnerships and collaboration with government, communities, development partners and other stakeholders in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

5.0 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this Gender Policy is to provide a comprehensive institutional framework that guides the integration of gender-responsive principles, practices and decision-making processes across all functions of MUAST. The Policy seeks to strengthen institutional capacity to identify, address and prevent systemic barriers that hinder equitable participation, advancement and access to opportunities within the University community. It establishes mechanisms for fostering a culture of mutual respect, accountability, dignity and inclusivity, while ensuring that governance structures, resource allocation, infrastructure development, academic programmes, research initiatives, innovation systems, community engagement activities and employment practices are responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of all stakeholders. The Policy further aims to promote sustainable institutional transformation through evidence-based planning, gender-responsive budgeting, capacity building, continuous monitoring and stakeholder collaboration, thereby enhancing social justice, human rights, ethical conduct, good governance and the University's contribution to national development, agricultural transformation and global sustainable development goals.

6.0 SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all members of the University community including Council members, management, employees, students, researchers, contractors, visitors and stakeholders.

7.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

7.1 Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013.

7.2 The Labor Act [Chapter 28:01].

7.3 The Domestic Violence Act [Chapter 5:16].

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7.4 Zimbabwe National Gender Policy (2025).
7.5 Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act [Chapter 10:31].
7.6 Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Act [Chapter 25:29].
7.7 Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Student Charter.
7.8 The Education Act [Chapter 25:04].
7.9 Public Service Commission Sexual Harassment Policy (2022)
7.10 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development
7.11 African Union Agenda 2063
7.12 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)
7.13 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

8.0 BACKGROUND

8.1 MUAST management shall be responsible for promoting and implementing gender mainstreaming initiatives within the University. In order to facilitate the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming programmes and activities, all newly appointed Council members, management personnel, employees and students shall undergo gender orientation and awareness training within a reasonable period after joining the University.

8.2 The purpose of the orientation programme shall be to strengthen understanding and awareness of gender equality, inclusion, human rights, diversity, prevention of sexual harassment and gender-based violence, and gender-responsive institutional practices among both women and men within the University community. MUAST shall therefore establish appropriate gender management systems, structures and institutional mechanisms to ensure the effective coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming initiatives across all faculties, departments, research stations and University programmes.

9.0 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

MUAST shall mainstream gender into all institutional functions by:

9.1 Developing gender-responsive curricula and teaching materials;
9.2 Supporting research on gender, agriculture, science, technology and development;

9.3 Collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data;
9.4 Promoting gender-responsive agricultural innovation and extension services;
9.5 Ensuring gender-sensitive infrastructure and facilities;
9.6 Integrating gender perspectives into strategic plans, policies, budgets and resource allocation processes through gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

10.0 GENDER IMPACT OF UNIVERSITY DECISIONS

MUAST shall ensure that all decisions and interventions respond to the specific needs, interests and experiences of women and men, as well as vulnerable and vulnerable groups within the University community. The University shall therefore promote gender-responsive planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation processes in order to advance equal participation, access to opportunities and equitable outcomes in all areas of University operations.

11.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

11.1 Recruitment and Selection

11.1.1 The University shall ensure that recruitment and selection processes are transparent, fair and non-discriminatory. Measures shall include:
11.1.2 Equal opportunity advertising;
11.1.3 Gender-balanced interview panels where possible;
11.1.4 Merit-based selection;
11.1.5 Encouragement of applications from vulnerable groups.

11.2 Promotion and Career Development

The University shall promote equitable access to:
11.2.1 Promotions, scholarships and fellowships;
11.2.2 Staff development programmes, leadership training;
11.2.3 Research opportunities, conference participation.

11.3 Equal Remuneration

MUAST shall uphold equal pay for equal work and ensure fairness in remuneration and benefits.

11.4 **Work-Life Balance**

The University shall support work-life balance through:

11.4.1 Maternity leave, paternity leave, compassionate leave,

11.4.2 Flexible work arrangements where feasible,

11.4.3 Supportive policies for nursing mothers and caregivers.

11.5 **Capacity Building and Training**

11.5.1 MUAST shall implement continuous capacity-building and training programmes to advance gender equality, equity and inclusion across the University.

11.5.2 The University shall facilitate training awareness programmes aimed at strengthening understanding of gender mainstreaming, sexual harassment, gender-based violence, human rights, diversity, and inclusion.

11.5.3 Capacity-building initiatives shall further enhance the integration of gender considerations into planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.

12.0 STUDENT WELFARE AND ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

MUAST shall promote a gender-responsive learning environment by:

12.1 Ensuring equal access to academic programmes and resources;

12.2 Promoting female participation in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and agriculture disciplines;

12.3 Providing counselling and support services;

12.4 Addressing barriers affecting student participation and performance;

12.5 Providing safe and secure accommodation and campus facilities;

12.6 Supporting students with disabilities and vulnerable students.

13.0 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

13.1 MUAST adopts a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and all other forms of unacceptable conduct.

13.2 The University shall prohibit and address all forms of digital and online harassment in all University activities.

13.3 The University's Sexual Harassment Policy and other related institutional policies provide clear procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating and addressing sexual harassment complaints in accordance with principles of natural justice.

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14.0 RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MUAST shall encourage gender-responsive agricultural and scientific research, promote inclusion of women and marginalised communities in agricultural innovation programmes, integrate gender perspectives into extension services and outreach programmes, and support research addressing rural livelihoods, food security, climate resilience and gender equality.

14.1 Research and Gender-Responsive Data Management

14.1.1 MUAST shall promote research and targeted data collection as integral components of the implementation, monitoring and continuous improvement of this Policy.

14.1.2 The University shall support the generation and utilisation of evidence-based knowledge to inform institutional planning, policy formulation, decision-making and resource allocation on matters relating to gender equality, equity and inclusion.

14.2 Innovation, Industrialisation and Community Engagement

14.2.1 MUAST shall promote gender-responsive innovation by ensuring equitable participation of women, men, and vulnerable groups in research, technology development, industrialisation, entrepreneurship and innovation programmes across the University.

14.2.2 The University shall encourage and support research and innovation initiatives that address gender-related challenges in agriculture, food systems, climate resilience, rural development, science, technology and sustainable livelihoods.

14.2.3 Innovation hubs, industrial parks, incubation centres and technology transfer programmes shall promote equal access to opportunities, resources, mentorship, funding and capacity-building initiatives for all genders.

14.2.4 MUAST shall facilitate the participation and leadership of women and other vulnerable groups in science, technology, engineering, agriculture and innovation-related fields to reduce existing disparities and enhance inclusive development.

14.2.5 The University shall integrate gender perspectives into the design, development, testing, adoption and dissemination of agricultural technologies, innovations and sustainable farming solutions to

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ensure that such innovations respond to the diverse needs of communities.

14.2.6 MUAST shall promote inclusive community engagement programmes that recognise and address the different needs, experiences and contributions of women, men, youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups within communities served by the University.

14.2.7 Outreach and knowledge-transfer programmes shall be designed and implemented in a gender-responsive manner to ensure equitable access to information, training, technologies, markets and productive resources.

14.2.8 The University shall establish and strengthen partnerships with government institutions, local communities, industry, development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to advance gender equality, innovation and sustainable agricultural development.

14.2.9 Community engagement initiatives shall promote the empowerment of women and youth through skills development, entrepreneurship, innovation adoption, leadership development and participation in value-chain development programmes.

14.2.10 MUAST shall encourage research and community engagement initiatives that contribute to the achievement of national, regional and international commitments on gender equality, sustainable development, climate resilience, food security and social transformation.

14.3 The University shall monitor and evaluate the gender responsiveness and impact of innovation and community engagement programmes to ensure that they contribute to equitable participation, inclusive development and sustainable outcomes for both the University and the communities it serves.

15.0 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

15.1 The implementation of this Policy shall be coordinated through an integrated institutional framework designed to ensure that gender equality, equity and inclusion are embedded within the governance, management, academic and administrative systems of the University.

15.2 All members of the University community, including Council members, management, employees, students, contractors and visitors, shall uphold the principles of gender equality, equity, diversity, inclusion, dignity and mutual respect, and shall contribute towards the effective implementation of this Policy.

16.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Registrar's office shall regularly collect feedback from students, staff, management, community partners and other stakeholders to continuously improve gender mainstreaming programmes, policies and interventions within the University. The feedback obtained shall be used to assess the effectiveness, inclusivity and responsiveness of gender initiatives and to ensure that they adequately address the evolving needs, challenges and expectations of the University community and society at large.

17.0 COMPLIANCE

17.1 This policy is informed by the relevant Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines.

17.2 Failure to comply with the policy is an act of misconduct which is subject to disciplinary action.

18.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

18.1 This policy shall be reviewed after 4 years from the date of approval.

Recommended: ..... Date: 04/06/2026
(Chairperson of Vice Chancellor's Executive Committee)

Recommended: ..... Date: 05/06/2026
(Chairperson of Senate)

Approved: ..... Date: .....
(Chairperson of Council)