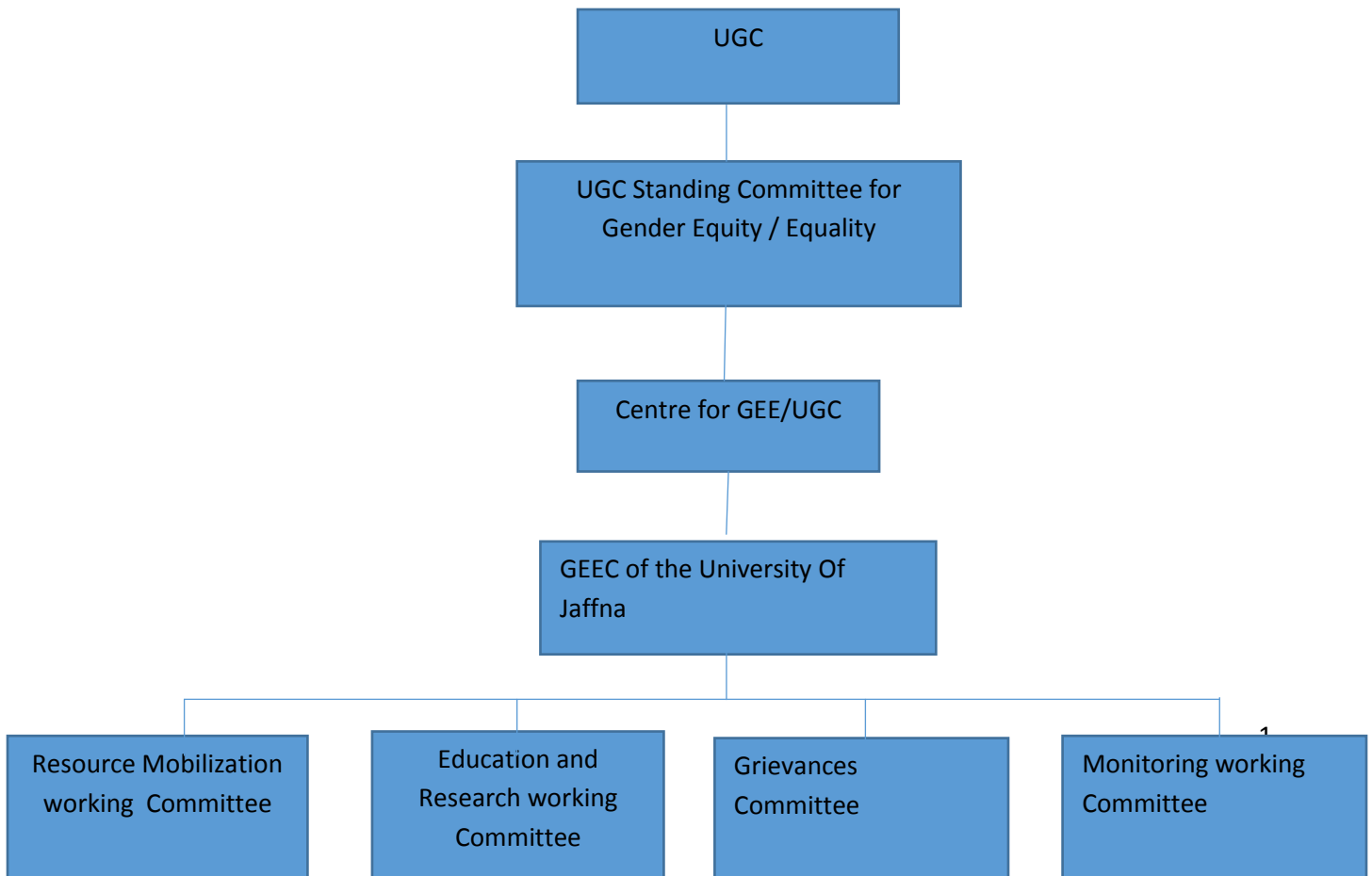# POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUITY/EQUALITY UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA

1 Background

Gender inequalities and violence including sexual and gender-based violence in the universities have been reported as significant shortcomings in the Sri Lankan University System (UGC; CARE & FUTA 2015). University Grants Commission (UGC) has recognized these issues and realized that without addressing these deep rooted inequalities and inequities within the system, Sri Lankan universities cannot genuinely consider themselves to be centres of academic excellence. These issues also will curb the goal of the government of Sri Lanka to make the country as an education hub of the region. Therefore, the UGC has taken up the challenge to address these unresolved concerns by establishing a centre at the UGC for Gender Equity/Equality (GEE) in October 2015 to institute socially responsive and gender-sensitive university sub-cultures with an environment of freedom and security that allows students and all university staff to pursue their study and work without discrimination and oppression. The centre is managed directly by the UGC Standing Committee for Gender Equity/Equality. The management structure of the UGC centre for Gender Equity/Equality up to the university level is given below.

UGC

UGC Standing Committee for Gender Equity / Equality

Centre for GEE/UGC

GEEC of the University Of Jaffna

Resource Mobilization working Committee

Education and Research working Committee

Grievances Committee

Monitoring working Committee

2 Commitment of University of Jaffna

University of Jaffna is committed to promote the Gender Equity/Equality (GEE) among students and staff. This includes, ensuring equal rights and opportunities, women empowerment and an environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. The university community has the responsibility of ensuring that it is free from gender inequity and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

University of Jaffna is willing to promote equality between women and men, to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to provide an inclusive working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected to assist them in reaching their full potential. The university will work to remove any barriers in terms of GEE which might deter people of the highest ability from being part of University of Jaffna as staff or students.

3 Policy Framework

The policy seeks to create a framework that will assist the university to ensure GEE in all staff and student activities, equitable participation and appropriate representation of all genders in all its decision making process and prevent SGBV.

3.1 Scope of the Policy

The policy establishes the basis for University of Jaffna in cooperation with the Government, UGC and society at large to promote GEE.

This policy applies to all members of the university (hereafter called as University community) , including students, employees (permanently or regularly or temporarily employed), visitors, any service providers such as transport, accommodation, catering, sanitation etc., studying, living, visiting, conducting business or collaboration, or having any official capacity at the university.

This policy also applies to off-campus conduct that is likely to have a substantial adverse effect on any member of the university community or university.

3.2 Overarching Policy Statement

Achieving GEE for all staff and students is a strategic objective of University of Jaffna. The university explicitly plans to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue into both its core and supportive functions. University of Jaffna is committed to lead the next generation on the way to secure equality/equity of opportunities for all genders whether students, staff or external users of the university resources.

In realizing GEE, University of Jaffna shall endeavor to do everything within its means not to overlook the diversities among and between members of University of Jaffna community.

The policy recognizes gender education as a major pillar in the process of achieving GEE and women empowerment through transformative development process.

University of Jaffna is committed to work with all its stakeholders within and outside the university guided by the strategic actions outlined in this document.

This policy provides preventive mechanisms against violations of the policy hence any one violating this policy is subject to disciplinary action as stated in the by-laws.

3.2.1 Policy Vision

A gender-responsive university with zero tolerance towards SGBV

3.2.2 Policy Mission

To enable a gender-responsive environment and to integrate gender into the functions of the university in order to attain GEE and gender empowerment to achieve zero tolerance against SGBV

4   Guiding Principles

Policy will be based on the following principles:

- Principles of GEE shall be upheld
- Equal participation of all genders of the university community in the implementation of the policy shall be upheld
- Gender empowerment is central to the achievement of the goal and objectives of the policy
- Transparency, accountability, confidentiality and sensitivity in the implementation of the policy as appropriate shall be upheld
- Mutual understanding and respect among staff and students shall be upheld to enable a conducive learning and working environment free from SGBV
- Principle of zero tolerance to SGBV shall be upheld

5   Specific objectives of the policy:

- Ensure GEE during the process of both academic and administrative staffing and decision making
- Promote and achieve gender balance in enrolment of students wherever applicable
- Achieve and maintain gender balance in unions and other university bodies
- Maintain gender-disaggregated statistics on both staff and students for decision making
- Address gender issues in the content of courses
- Develop policy documents from a gender perspective
- Use gender sensitive language at all levels
- Prevent cases of SGBV at University of Jaffna
- Sensitize university community on GEE, SGBV and the consequences
- Create awareness on the reporting procedure for victims of SGBV
- Provide prompt, effective, consistent and fair guidelines for handling cases of SGBV at the university
- Provide disciplinary procedures and vindicate justice for the aggrieved
- Promote research and publication of research findings and recommendations regarding GEE and SGBV
- Provide adequate security and surveillance in the public/common places to prevent SGBV

6 Policy Resolutions

6.1 Organizational culture

Objective: *University of Jaffna shall promote and enforce gender-responsive organizational culture to eliminate gender inequities in all university activities*

To achieve this objective, University of Jaffna shall:
- Develop and enforce policy guidelines on the use of gender inclusive language throughout the university
- Review and update all existing policies, forms, and procedures to eliminate sexist language and establish gender equality
- Develop and operationalize policy prohibiting public display of visual aids and materials that are demeaning to men and women
- Organize special gender awareness orientation programmes for new members of university bodies

6.2 Awareness creation

Objective: To enhance better understanding and appreciation of GEE and SGBV throughout the entire University of Jaffna community with the aim of preventing occurrence of the same

To achieve this objective, University of Jaffna shall:

- Conduct workshops on GEE and SGBV for all staff and students
- Create and support an advocacy group to advance issues of GEE and SGBV
- Publish the policy on GEE and SGBV and disseminate to all members of staff and students
- Ensure all staff and students abide by the policy
- Sensitize the university community on the policy regularly

6.3 Safety and security

Objective: The university management and administration shall promote a gender friendly and inclusive secure environment in the university in order to ensure effective protection of bodily integrity and dignity of every member of the university community to strengthen safety and security measures for all members of the University community

To achieve this objective University of Jaffna shall**:**
- Implement policy and regulations on sexual harassment and gender based violence
- Develop and enforce guidelines to ensure a secure environment that include street and security lighting; posting security at strategic points; providing night surveillance services; availing hotlines for emergencies, etc. with particular attention to halls of residence
- The university shall institute concrete mechanisms to address gender-based violence against students and staff
- Strengthen counselling services and allocate adequate resources for prevention, management, and rehabilitation of survivors of gender based violence at the university

6.4 Curriculum and co- curricular programmes
Objective: To mainstream gender in the formal curriculum and strengthen the co-curricular programmes

To achieve the objective University of Jaffna shall
- Create a framework for engendering the university curriculum
- Mainstream gender issues in the formal university curriculum

- Review and engender all existing curricula and ensure that the new programmes are gender responsive
- Encourage staff and students to actively participate in gender focused co-curricular activities
- design and implement a mandatory cross cutting core course on gender and development for undergraduants and postgraduate students

6.5 Capacity building and training

Objective: *To enhance the capacity of members of the university community and managers to support the implementation of the policy*

To achieve this objective University of Jaffna shall:
- Train all members of the community to facilitate the implementation process
- Institute empowerment programmes to protect all members of the university community against SGBV
- Strengthen the current guidance and counselling unit to deal effectively with cases of SGBV
- Facilitate university health providers to recognize and be responsive to the emotional and psychological needs of staff and students

6.6 Research and innovations

Objective: *The University shall adopt a gender-responsive research environment that improves our understanding of national development issues, and impacts positively on the lives of men and women*

To achieve this objective University of Jaffna shall:
- Design and carry out a gender-focused research skills training programme for staff members
- Develop guidelines to ensure that all research processes and innovations, irrespective of discipline, integrate gender analysis
- Design and implement an affirmative action programme to encourage participation of female members of staff, with specific budget allocations to support their multiple roles in society
- Expand dissemination outlets of international standards for gender focused research and publications
- Encourage increased operational research leading to evidence–based programming /service delivery for handling of SGBV research agenda
- Facilitate the identification of SGBV research capacities /needs and develop an SGBV research agenda

- Encourage research methodologies and approaches that are sensitive to survivors of SGBV and lead to mechanisms for eradicating SGBV

6.7 Women's participation in decision making

Objective: The University shall adopt proactive measures to increase the participation of women in decision making during recruitment and promotion and in retention in order to eliminate the existing gender imbalances within systems, structures, and all core activities of the university

To meet this objective, University of Jaffna shall:

- Design and implement programmes that ensure equal opportunities and affirmative action
- Design and implement a gender-responsive cross generational leadership and mentoring programme for young female staff in all disciplines
- Establish and implement programmes with adequate facilities and resources to support the multiple roles of university staff , particularly their career, studies and care-giving roles
- Develop and implement a gender sensitive and responsive human resources policy
- Develop a databank of qualifications, specialties, and experiences of women on the supreme university governing bodies, such as the university council, senate and other related bodies.

6.8 Resource mobilization and Gender mainstreaming

Objective: The University shall actively promote resource mobilization and gender budgeting processes as a way of ensuring adequate and sustainable budget allocations for effective institutionalization of gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue within the core activities of the university

To achieve this University of Jaffna shall:

- Develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy for financing the GEE objectives
- Design guidelines and implement gender budgeting training programme for all key staff in the university who are involved in the planning and budgeting processes
- Earmark budgetary resources, on the basis of a well–clarified percentage for funding gender mainstreaming processes in all the core functions of the university
- Establish a mechanism for financial accountability for resources allocated for gender mainstreaming

6.9 Staff and Student welfare

Objective: The University shall plan and safeguard welfare of all its staff and students to achieve optimal productivity

To meet this University of Jaffna shall:

- Engender human resource policies
- Formulate and implement a gender-sensitive policy on disability including accessibility to the university buildings and facilities
- Formulate and implement a policy on pregnant and parenting students and sensitize all relevant staff on sexual and reproductive rights of students
- Invest on-campus child care facilities on university campus for the benefit of parenting staff

6.10 Creation of the GEE Centre

Objective: A GEE Centre will be established reporting to the Vice Chancellor so as to ensure its capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the GEE Policy

To meet this University of Jaffna shall:
- Seek approval for the positioning of the GEE Centre by Senate and Council
- Establish the GEE Centre with adequate space and staff
- Implement Resource Mobilization Strategy to enable the Centre to access resources
- GEE Centre will organize regular meetings once in every two months to assess progress, monitor and evaluate the GEE Programme, consider implementation strategies and develop sustainable strategies

7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability for GEE

7.1 Responsibility for Implementation of GEE

All individuals of university community and all those who are associated with University of Jaffna have the responsibility to adhere to the policy. The overall responsibilities in relation to this policy are as follows:

Council

As the Governing Authority of University of Jaffna, the Council is responsible for ensuring that University of Jaffna fulfils its legal and financial responsibilities for promoting GEE and eliminating any forms of gender based discrimination. In order to fulfill this, Council needs to receive bi-annual progress report through the Vice Chancellor on the monitoring and implementation of the GEE policy to ensure that the policy is being operationalized. The Council discharges its responsibility through the management structures of University of Jaffna if necessary.

The Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented and that staff are aware of their responsibilities, accountability, and training needs; ensuring that appropriate action is taken against staff or students who violate the policy.

The Vice-Chancellor relies on the   GEE Centre to take forward the GEE agenda ensuring that it is fully operationalized. The Vice Chancellor shall take necessary actions based on the recommendations of the GEE Centre on issues related to GEE and SGBV.

Rector and Registrar

The Rector is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented in the campus and that staff are aware of their responsibilities, accountability, and training needs; ensuring that appropriate action is taken against staff or students who violate the policy.

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented among the administrative and nonacademic staff and that the staff are aware of their responsibilities, accountability, and training needs; ensuring that appropriate action is taken against staff who violate the policy.

Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments

They are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their areas of responsibilities. This involves allowing the GEE Centre to publicize the policy and institute strategic actions and procedures into practice; making sure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying out their duties; and ensure necessary action is taken against staff and students who discriminate on grounds of gender.

7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective institutional arrangement for monitoring and evaluation are key components for achieving the objectives of the policy. This can only be achieved by instituting an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the system to ensure adherence to this policy.

7.3 Institutional and Regulatory Frameworks

The implementation of the GEE Policy requires a well coordinated and guided institutional framework to translate goals, objectives and strategies into action programmes at all levels of the university functions. The implementation of the policy will therefore be operationalized through the existing University bodies such as Senate and Council on policy matters.

7.3.1 University of Jaffna GEE Centre

There shall be a GEE Centre of University of Jaffna reporting to the Vice-Chancellor with the following roles:

- To provide training on gender equity and equality (including social intersections) for the establishment of a core team of gender experts
- To conduct research, review policies and contribute policy inputs at the university level
- To perform curricular reforms to inculcate the concepts and practices of GEE
- To prevent and respond to SGBV by developing relevant skills
- To receive complaints on SGBV from the university community and initiate mechanisms to deal with the complaints and make recommendations to the vice chancellor on such cases if necessary
- To identify ways and means of preventing SGBV in the university and empower staff and students to prevent and respond to SGBV by developing relevant skills
- To enhance its capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the GEE Policy at the institutional level

Composition:

The GEE Centre shall consist of the following members, who shall hold office for a period of two years with effect from the date of appointment.

- 2 Council members nominated by the Council among its appointed members (one male & one female)
- Proctor
- Director/Student Welfare
- 2 Wardens of the Hostels(one male & one female)
- Chief Marshal or his/her nominee
- 2 external female academics specialized in gender issues appointed by the Vice-Chancellor
- 2 female non-state actors engaged in GEE appointed by the Vice-Chancellor

- 6 elected representatives among the academic staff (three male & three female)
- 2 elected representatives among the administrative staff (one male & one female)
- 2 elected representatives among the non-academic staff (one male & one female)
- 6 elected representatives among the students (three male & three female)
- An Attorney_at_Law appointed by the Vice Chancellor

The members shall elect a Chairperson amongst the six elected academic staff members who shall preside at all meetings. The quorum of the meeting shall be 2/3rd of the members.

The members shall elect a Secretary amongst the two elected administrative staff members. The Secretary is responsible for complying with and carrying out the responsibilities under the Policy Framework for GEE and SGBV By-Law.

The pioneer members of GEEC shall be appointed by the Vice Chancellor with the approval of the Council. The pioneer members shall hold the office for two years from the date of appointment.

Committees of the University of Jaffna GEE Centre

The GEE Centre will have following Committees composed of members drawn from relevant university units to offer expertise and additional support to the GEE Centre:

a) Resource Mobilization
b) Education and Research
c) Monitoring
d) Grievances

Committees will review their progress on the implementation of GEE activities annually and submit them to the GEE Centre for consideration and forwarding to Senate and to Council.

The Policy and annual progress reports will be published on the University of Jaffna website.