



PHOENICIA UNIVERSITY

Discrimination and Harassment Policy

I. Overview:

Phoenicia University (PU) dedicates itself towards promoting the principles of good practice in all of its aspects; equity, fairness and social justice as well as complying with current and future relevant legislation.

PU is strongly committed to providing a safe, diverse, inclusive, friendly, discrimination-free, and violence-free environment for students, staff, faculty members, and PU community.

In all its academic and administrative transactions, offerings, opportunities, and services, PU strictly forbids any type of discrimination, including—but not restricted to—race, color, religion, age, identity, preferences, marital status, and disability.

Through continuous improvement, PU strives to incorporate equal opportunity principles into all areas of its activities including its decision-making and planning processes.

II. Purpose/Objectives:

This policy expresses PU's commitment as a higher education institution that values equality, equity, fairness, and transparency to:

- a. Encourage all staff, faculty and students to excel in a friendly, peaceful, discrimination-free, violence-free, highly-ethical, diverse, and inclusive environment;
- b. Ensure that all applicants for employment are recruited, hired, and assigned based on merit with lack of discrimination due to race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin or disability;
- c. Ensure that all visitors such as suppliers, service providers and guest speakers are aware of PU's highest standards of behavior and will be held accountable for any act of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct against any member of the PU community;
- d. Ensure the transparency of discipline procedures and that such procedures are consistent, fair, and equitable, adhering to the principles of natural justice;
- e. Create a set of standards and principles which identify responsibilities and accountabilities to inform grievance procedures and disciplinary actions;
- f. Set a proportionate, appropriate, and consistent framework of penalties which may be imposed in cases of substantiated misconduct;
- g. Inhibit nepotism practices.

III. Scope/Application:

This policy applies to:

- a. All members of the University community (staff, faculty and students)
- b. Visitors
- c. Trainees
- d. Suppliers
- e. Academic appointees

This policy applies to discrimination and discriminatory misconduct that occurs on campus, off campus when the conduct affects or may affect any of the party's capability to participate in an educational or work related program and via any means of communication (online, phone, email, social media): when the conduct occurs in connection with a program or activity related to the University

IV. Accountability:

Accountable/Responsible Officer	Accountable Officer
Accountable Officers	Dr. Imad Zbib
Responsible Officer	Office of the Registrar (Student Incidents) Human Resources Department(Staff Incidents)

V. Policy Statement

PU avoids discrimination on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, reproductive health decision-making, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age, sex, military status, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law, in connection with any aspect.

In addition, any form of harassment on the basis of any legally protected characteristic is also considered as discrimination which in turn is forbidden by this University policy. Inhibited harassment happens when a hostile environment that has been created is greatly severe,

pervasive, or persistent to an extent that it unreasonably affects a person's work performance or participation in University activities.

VI. Definitions:

Discrimination: Discrimination is defined as conduct directed at a specific individual or a group of identifiable individuals that subjects them to treatment that badly affects their employment or education because of their race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status. PU does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities or decisions on the basis of personal characteristics which are not appropriate to an individual's abilities, qualifications, or job performance. PU is committed to maintaining an environment that encourages proper conduct among all persons and respect for individual values.

Accordingly, the University is committed to enforcing the non-discrimination policy at all levels in order to create an environment free from discrimination especially those based on race, gender, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, marital status, citizenship status, or on any other legally prohibited basis. Such discrimination violates University policy and will not be tolerated.

Harassment: Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, is a form of discrimination forbidden by law. PU prohibits harassment on the basis of age, color, disability, family responsibilities, marital status, national origin and accent, personal appearance, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, source of income or other factors prohibited by the Lebanese Law. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that shows aggression to an individual.

In fact, this act may include, but is not limited to: verbal abuse or ridicule, including insults, epithets, and stereotyping; offensive jokes and comments; threatening, or hostile acts, and displaying or distributing offensive materials, writings, graffiti, or pictures.

Harassment may include conduct carried out through the internet, email, social media, or other electronic means. Accordingly, the University is committed to enforcing the non-harassment policy at all levels in order to create a safe environment.

Sexual Misconduct: PU does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment. This includes: any form of Sexual Assault connected with forced sexual contact, including but not limited to rape. Force can be physical or emotional (physical, threat, intimidation, coercion). Sexual Assault consists of Sexual Contact and/or Sexual Intercourse that happens without Affirmative Consent. Sexual Contact is any intentional sexual touching, however slight with any object or body part performed by a person upon another person. Sexual Intercourse is any penetration, however slight with any object or body part performed by a person upon another person and is considered rape if the action is taken without the affirmative consent of the other individual(s).

Affirmative Consent must be informed (knowing), voluntary (freely given), and active (not passive), meaning that, through the demonstration of clear words or actions, a person has indicated consent to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity (contact or intercourse). Affirmative Consent cannot be gained by taking advantage of the weakness of another individual, where the person initiating sexual activity reasonably should have known that the other was weakened. It cannot be obtained by force such as by the use of physical violence, threats, intimidation, and/or coercion.

Physical violence: PU does not tolerate any type of physical violence. Physical violence means that a person is exerting power over another person through the use of physical force. Examples include hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, restraining, choking, and brandishing or using any weapon. Threats are words or actions that would compel a reasonable person to engage in unwanted activity. Examples include threats to harm a person physically, to reveal private information to harm a person's reputation, or to cause a person academic or economic harm. Intimidation is an implied threat that causes reasonable fear in another individual, including the stalking of another individual. Coercion is the use of an unreasonable amount of pressure to gain access to something or someone. Coercion is more than an effort to convince, lure, or attract another person to have sex. When an individual is clear that they do not want to participate in a particular form of sexual contact or sexual intercourse, that they want to stop, or that they do not want to go beyond a certain sexual interaction, continued pressure can be coercive. Factors that may indicate coercion include the frequency, intensity and duration of the application of the pressure and the degree of isolation of the person being pressured.

VII. Accommodation for Disabilities

PU is committed to providing equal employment opportunities and reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals including individuals with disabilities. The University prohibits discrimination against a qualified person with a disability in employment practices such as the job application process, hiring, promotion, termination, compensation, and other conditions of employment.

In fact, to ensure that an employee can perform his/her job responsibilities, a reasonable accommodation by PU may include the purchase of special equipment, changing the physical layout of the workplace, restructuring job responsibilities and duties, and modifying the work schedule.

PU is committed to providing a supportive environment for all faculty, staff, and students with disabilities. PU works to provide all individuals with disabilities with a learning and community environment that affords them full participation, equal access, and reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

Even though the employee provides input concerning the accommodation process, PU will determine what constitutes a reasonable accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

For some cases, disability information is treated as confidential and will be shared with PU administrators only on a need to know basis.

VIII. Nepotism

This policy also aims at avoiding favoritism, the appearance of or potential for favoritism, and conflicts of interest. Nepotism is inconsistent with PU's longstanding policy of making all decisions based only on PU needs and individual qualifications, skills, and performance.

IX. Reporting Acts of Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct

The University has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and discrimination. Any form of such behavior is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. Any PU staff, faculty or student who believes, in good faith, that he/she or someone else at PU has been a victim of discrimination, harassment or any form of sexual misconduct should immediately notify the relevant department and report the incident promptly through one of the following methods:

- **Informal Reporting:**

Students wishing to grieve an alleged violation of the University's Discrimination and Harassment policy shall, within 15 working days of any occurrence giving rise to the grievance, first contact the person responsible for the matter being grieved (the respondent) and attempt to resolve the grievance informally. Students who require assistance in identifying or contacting the person responsible may consult the Student Affairs Office. If a resolution is reached informally, it shall be documented in writing. The documentation shall include both the underlying allegation(s) and the terms of the agreed upon resolution.

A staff member wishing to grieve an alleged violation of this policy should, within 15 working days of any occurrence giving rise to the grievance, first contact his direct manager and may request to speak to someone in the Human Resources Department. If the grievance is against the direct manager, the said employee shall raise the issue directly with the Human Resources Department.

- **Formal Reporting:**

If the informal grievance procedure does not yield a satisfactory resolution within 15 working days after the staff/ student has contacted the relevant person, or in cases of urgent incidents, the staff/student may submit a formal complaint. In such case, the complaint must be submitted to the designated Responsible Officer specified under section IV and should adhere to the proper due process outlined in the University Grievance Policies.

X. Investigation

After a formal complaint is made, PU will launch an investigation into the matter as per the University's grievance policies. During this time, the victim should avoid contact with the accused person and avoid discussing the case with anyone except for the designated investigator.

XI. Resolution

Based on the findings of the investigation, the University will take appropriate action to resolve the issue. This could include disciplinary action against the accused person, or measures to ensure the safety and well-being of the victim.

XII. Confidentiality

The University will maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible while still conducting a thorough investigation. Only those who need to know will be informed of the allegations. Except as permitted by the policies or applicable laws.

XIII. Remedies

The University will provide appropriate remedies to the reporting party depending on the post of the accused party.

XIV. Retaliation:

Retaliation against any staff who files a grievance or participates in the grievance process is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

XV. Discipline:

If the investigation determines that sexual harassment or discrimination has occurred, the University will take prompt and effective corrective action, up to and including termination of employment for the responsible party.

XVI. Record Keeping:

The responsible officer shall retain a copy of the complaint, any amended complaint, any decision of the committee.

Thank You

