

Gender Equality And Empowerment Of Women Policy

The policy statement

It is Universal Group moral and legal responsibility to engage in a gender equality approach in all its policies, programmes and projects in order to ensure fairness in the treatment of women and men. Given ingrained disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Specific measures must be developed to identify and remove the underlying causes of discrimination in policies, procedures, beliefs, practices and attitudes that maintain gender inequality. This can only be achieved from a multi-dimensional approach that focuses on all aspects both internal and external to Universal Group. Universal Group is firmly committed to supporting the achievement of equality between women and men to ensure sustainable development.

The policy objective

The main purpose of this policy is to serve as a tool and framework for enhancing gender equality in the workplace and to enable Universal Group to integrate gender into key organisational practices. Further, it suggests the development of specific interventions to meet the practical and strategic needs of women in order to ensure the empowerment of women as a step towards gender equality.

Universal Group give commitment to the conduct of its business in line with the highest ethical standards and in compliance with applicable legal requirements.

The highest standards of behaviour is expected of all employees, directors, consultants, business partners, and company representatives with emphasis on performance with integrity. This means that in performance of our duties and achievement of results, we must strive to conduct ourselves in line with our corporate values because our corporate values are the starting point and foundation of our ethics. Ethics involves distinguishing between what is right and wrong and then making the right choice, acting responsibly and taking accountability for our actions. Universal Group's commitment to ethics is about ensuring we understand and demonstrate acceptable standards in the conduct of our daily work, in decision making, in our relationships internally and with our stakeholders; doing so with transparency, dignity, honesty and integrity. The basic requirement is that we must act in the best interest of Universal Group in line with our values in spite of the pressures we unavoidably experience in the process.

As a company, our employees come from diverse backgrounds and cultures. What brings us together as a dynamic work force is our corporate culture. Our integrity will be measured in terms of how well we live our values in spite of the pressures experienced while conducting our business and activities in the various environments in which we are present, how well we can be trusted to do what we say we will, and how well we each act consistently with honesty and accountability. Compliance with our acceptable standards of behaviour is mandatory for all of us. It applies to all subsidiaries, managed joint ventures and service organisations. Our reputation is important. Our stakeholders expect and trust us to conduct our business in a manner that demonstrates consistency with our corporate values and that is in line with the highest standards of ethics.

Scope

The policy sets broad guidelines for Universal Group in order to achieve gender equality. The Women's Empowerment Principles include:

- Leadership Promotes Gender Equality.
- Universal Group promotes Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Non-discrimination.
- Universal Group will provide working conditions that promote the Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence for its employees.
- Universal Group will provide equal access to Education and Training.
- Universal Group will support gender equity through Community Leadership and Engagement.
- Universal Group will promote equal opportunity in Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices.
- Universal Group will make public its gender policy and support its implementation through Transparency, Measuring and Reporting.

Guiding principles

The policy is constructed on the following guiding principles:

- Women's rights should be seen as human rights.
- Gender equity is a principle that guides interventions.
- Fairness of treatment for women and men, as well as equal access to opportunities.
- Fairness in the treatment of different categories of women. Women are not a homogenous group, i.e. the situations and experiences of women vary.

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- Affirmative action programmes targeting women to be developed as a corrective measure to equalise opportunities and access.
- That appropriate training be provided to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes towards gender equality.

Accountability and responsibility

The policy is ratified at Board level, and is the accountability of all board members to ensure the policy is communicated to all business areas.

It is the responsibility of every manager or employee in authority to ensure that behaviour that could constitute discrimination on the basis of gender is discouraged.

Managers have a further responsibility to ensure that employees in their area are aware of this policy. Managers should initiate corrective action when discrimination is observed or reported.

This policy will be reviewed annually, as a minimum.

Signed 
Managing Director

Dated 14/06/2022