Bahria University

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY /

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY

2024

Copy No. _____

Record of Amendments

Amendment No.	Dated	Authority for Amendment	Articles Amended
01	20/10/2025	DHR	Paras 3, 4 (k–n), 14; new para 24

Note: Amendments are to be recorded, cross-checked and their incorporation in thedocuments authenticated (with name, designation and signature).

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY / DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY 2024

INTRODUCTION

1. The Ordinance of Bahria University (No V of 2000) in its clause 5 states, "The University shall be open to all persons of either gender without prejudice of religion, race, class, creed, colour or ethnicity who qualify for admission for the courses of study offered by it based on the criteria and policy determined by the Board, and no such person shall be denied the privileges of the University on the grounds of gender, religion, race, class, creed, colour or ethnicity."

2. The Statutes of Bahria University, in the para 2.7 also lay down similar emphasis on equality and non-discrimination. It sates, "In accordance with Section 5 of BU Ordinance 2000, the University is open to all persons of any gender without prejudice of religion, race, class, creed, colour or ethnicity who qualify for admission for the courses of study offered by it based on the criteria and policy determined by the Board, and no such person is denied the privileges of the University on the ground of gender, religion, race, class, creed, colour or ethnicity."

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

3. This policy applies to all areas of Bahria University programs, activities encompassing induction of FMs, BUOs, BUSAS (including non-discrimination against women) and admission of students, employment practices and operations, including the conduct of all students and employees, as well as to the conduct of all guests, visitors, vendors, contractors, subcontractors and others who do business with Bahria University. This Policy also applies to every activity the University opens to the public, including access to its libraries and other learning resources, public lectures and events, executive education and vocational training, online and distance courses, and outreach beyond the campuses. These activities are open to all, regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status or gender, or any other ground in para 4, subject only to identification and security rules that apply equally to every visitor. DHR shall monitor compliance, and complaints follow paras 19 to 21. All harassment is within the scope of this Policy under para 24.

POLICY STATEMENT

4. Bahria University is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination in education and employment, including gender equality. Discrimination on the basis of the following, or any other legally protected basis, is unlawful and is prohibited by this Policy.

a. Age

b. Race

c. Colour

d. National origin

e. Gender

f. Religion

g. Caste

h. Creed

i. Disability

j. Political beliefs

k. Ethnicity

l. Gender identity

m. Refugee or asylum-seeker status

n. Immigration status

The University is committed to ending discrimination in the workplace on every ground in this para, in recruitment, appointment, pay, training, promotion, discipline and termination. No person shall be discriminated against on the basis of gender in employment, admission or any University service. Women's applications, entry, participation and graduation are dealt with under paras 2.1.6 and 2.1.7 of the Admission Policy.

5. Retaliation towards an individual for filing a complaint of discrimination including unequal treatment on the basis of gender or discriminatory harassment, participation in an investigation of such complaint and/or opposition to discrimination or discriminatory harassment in the educational or workplace setting is also a form of harassment and is therefore prohibited.

6. Any person who believes they have been subjected to this type of prohibited activity should immediately report it to the respective HCU (any Pro-Rector for BUHO).

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

7. **Complainant** – An individual who may have experienced Discrimination, or have not been treated equally by a Member of the University Community based on their Protected Class. Bystanders who are not a member of the Protected Class may make reports of alleged Discrimination or Misconduct, but are not considered Complainants under this Policy.

8. **Respondent** – A party or person who is designated to respond to a report or Formal Complaint. Generally, the Respondent is the person alleged to be responsible for the prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation alleged in the complaint. The term "Respondent" may also be used to designate persons with administrative responsibility for procedures and policies in those areas covered in a complaint.

9. **Discrimination** – Treating an individual or members of a Protected Class less favorably because of their membership in that class or having a policy or practice that has a disproportionately adverse impact on Protected Class members.

10. **Discriminatory Disparate Treatment** – It is singling out or targeting an individual for

unfavorable treatment because of their protected characteristic. In the employment context, the unfavorable treatment must negatively affect the terms and conditions of employment. In the education context, to rise to the level of discrimination, the treatment must unreasonably interfere with or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the institution's programs and activities. Examples include but are not limited to:

a. Failing or refusing to hire or admit an individual because of their protected characteristic.

b. Imposing more severe discipline on a student or employee because of their protected characteristic.

c. Giving a negative performance evaluation or grade/academic assessment because of an individual's protected characteristic.

d. Terminating, suspending, dismissing, or expelling an individual based on their protected characteristic.

11. **Harassment** – is either:

a. Subjecting an employee on the basis of their membership in a Protected Class to unwelcome conduct that is severe or pervasive enough to alter the conditions of the employee's employment and create a hostile or abusive working environment; or

b. Subjecting a student on the basis of their membership in a Protected Class to severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive treatment that denies the student equal access to education.

12. **Retaliation** – Adverse action taken against an individual in response to, motivated by or in connection with an individual's complaint of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, participation in an investigation of such complaint and/or opposition to discrimination or discriminatory harassment in the educational or workplace setting.

13. **Formal Complaint** – A document filed by a Complainant and accepted by the Equal Opportunity Coordinator / Director (Admin) Campus / Director (Admin) BUHO alleging Discrimination or Harassment against a Respondent and requesting that the University investigate the allegation(s).

14. **Protected Class** – A class of persons who are protected under applicable federal or Bahria University laws against Discrimination and Harassment on the basis, as described in the policy statement above. Each ground listed in para 4 defines a Protected Class.

15. **University Premises** – Buildings or grounds owned, leased, operated, controlled or supervised by the Bahria University.

16. **Inclusion** – SHRM defines inclusion as "the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success.

17. **Diversity** – Includes age, gender, disability, and vulnerable groups in addition to the country of origin, culture, history, religion, and traditions that a person brings from their natives.

18. **Equity** – Equity means fairness and without bias.

PROCEDURES

19. Any member of the university community who has been either a target of or a witness to discrimination, including unequal treatment on the basis of gender or harassment can file a complaint through proper channel. When someone raises a concern about discrimination or harassment, the university official, to whom the matter was reported, will try and resolve the issue through informal negotiations between the two parties. If this fails to achieve an amicable resolution of the reported issue, the matter be reported to the next higher officer for taking it up formally with the concerned parties.

20. **Informal Resolution**

a. Informal resolution has the goal of ending offensive behavior and resolving the concern rather than assessing blame and exacting a penalty. If a concern can't be resolved informally, or if the behavior is so serious or persistent as to warrant disciplinary action, it should be handled through formal procedures.

21. **Formal Procedures**

a. The purpose of formal action is to determine if the BU policy on discrimination, harassment and retaliation has been violated and, if so, to enact disciplinary actions and/or prescribe a course of action that will resolve the situation. Disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to a written reprimand, probation, suspension, dismissal or expulsion (BU Statutes Chapter 9 and BU Academic Rules Chapters 13, 14 & 15 refer).

b. Formal procedures are set in motion when a signed written complaint is filed. The complaint must contain the name and signature of the complainant, details of the situation precipitating the complaint, and a statement of desired outcome.

c. The process for filing a complaint, investigating and hearing complaints and grievances against individuals depends upon the status of the accused (faculty, academic staff, university staff, or student). The BU Statutes Chapter 9 and BU Academic Rules Chapters 13, 14 & 15 guide these processes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

22. Pro-Rectors, DGs, DHR, Directors CUs, CU Head of HR Department, DSA, Deans, Principals of Schools & Concerned HoDs have the responsibility to maintain and consistently manage the implementation of this policy.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

23. In the interest of providing a fair process, preserving privacy, and preventing retaliation, the following principles will be observed:

a. **Impartiality**. All persons charged with responsibility for implementing these procedures will discharge their obligations with fairness, rigor, and impartiality.

b. **Fair Process**. Principles of fair process should be observed throughout the process. This includes timely resolution of the process, proper notice to parties, and the ability to respond to allegations.

c. **Privacy**. All activities under these procedures will be conducted with regard for the legitimate privacy and reputational interests of all parties involved. Once a formal complaint is filed, all parties, including witnesses, will be notified of the expectation that they keep information about the case – including any documents that they may receive or review – confidential. They will also be notified that sharing such information might compromise the investigation or may be construed as retaliatory. Medical and counseling records are privileged and confidential documents that parties will not be required to disclose. The parties remain free to share their own experiences, other than information that they have learned solely through the procedures and processes under this Policy. To avoid the possibility of compromising the investigation, it is generally advisable to limit the number of people in whom the parties confide.

d. **Respondents are Presumed Not Responsible**. A respondent is presumed not to be responsible for an alleged Policy violation until a final determination regarding responsibility is made.

e. **University Values**. The procedures for this Policy are to be construed in accordance with broader University policies, including the University-Wide Statement on Rights and Responsibilities.

f. **Clarity and Visibility**. All members of the University community are expected to be aware of the University's Non-Discrimination Policy, understand what conduct is prohibited under the Policy, and understand what their rights and responsibilities are under the Policy and Procedures.

g. **Transparency**. Throughout the course of an investigation into a formal complaint, the Investigator will provide frequent updates to both the complainant (the person bringing the complaint) and the respondent (the person about whom the complaint has been made).

h. **Timelines**. The HCU/Pro-Rector concerned, may impose reasonable timeframes to enable timely resolution of the matter. The investigatory process typically will not exceed 90 ordinary business days, absent extenuating circumstances.

i. **Avoiding Conflict of Interest**. The University commits to eliminating any conflicts of interest in the process. In situations where either the complainant or the respondent names as a party or witness the University official(s) who are designated as facilitating or overseeing any stage in the Informal Resolution or Formal Complaint Processes, the Local Designated Resource, in consultation with appropriate School officials, will determine a

designee to assume those responsibilities in place of the named University official(s).

j. **Available Support and Remedies**. All members of the University community may seek supportive measures should they experience or witness conduct prohibited under this Policy. A party may seek supportive measures and resolution through informal processes under this Policy or other University procedures, and they remain free to pursue a formal complaint under this Policy without prejudice.

24. **Harassment**

a. No student, employee, visitor or contractor shall harass any person, of a Protected Class or not, on campus, online or at university activities.

b. Sexual harassment is handled under the HEC Policy on Protection Against Harassment in Higher Education Institutions (Revised 2025) and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, as amended, which prevail over paras 19 to 21 and 23(h).

c. The Rector shall notify two or more Focal Persons and a three-member Inquiry Committee, each including a woman, and the Competent Authority, and shall publish their names and contact details on the University website.

d. Complaints may be made directly, reach the Inquiry Committee within 24 hours and are decided within 30 days, with an appeal within 30 days. Para 5 bars retaliation.