



SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY

Gender-Based Violence Prevention Policy

January 2022

Abbreviations and Acronyms

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome

SEKU - South Eastern Kenya University

GBV – Gender Based Violence

SGBV - Sexual and Gender based violence

Definition of terms

Abuser	A person who perpetrates Gender-based Violence.
Gender based Violence	is violence visited upon a person based on their gender and includes child marriage; female genital mutilation; forced marriage; forced wife inheritance; interference from in-laws; sexual violence within marriage; virginity testing; widow cleansing; damage to property; defilement; harassment; incest; intimidation; physical abuse; sexual abuse; stalking; verbal abuse; or any other conduct against a person, where such conduct harms or may cause imminent harm to the safety, health, or well-being of the person, or any other act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
Sexual Based Violence	Actual, attempted or threatened (vaginal, anal or oral) rape, including marital rape; sexual abuse and exploitation; forced prostitution; transactional/survival sex; and sexual harassment, intimidation and humiliation.
Survivor	A person who has been subjected to gender-based violence.
Respondent	A person who is accused of perpetrating gender based violence
Victim	A person against whom an abuser directs Gender-based violence.

Foreword by the Chairperson of Council

Universities like all other government and private establishments have a serious problem with gender-based violence. To address this challenge, Universities are adopting measures and policies to eradicate, prevent, as well as respond to victims and survivors of these vices. The South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) Council is committed to ensuring that SEKU is free from all forms of gender-based violence. The Council thus expresses its resolve to ensure SEKUs compliance with the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, the Sexual Offences Act, 2006 and all relevant Kenya Government legislations that are necessary to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence at the Institution. This policy on the prevention of Gender-based violence prohibits all forms of mistreatment or discrimination of individuals based on gender classification as provided for by the law. It also serves as a crucial guiding document towards inculcating a culture of respect and tolerance to all forms of sexual and gender orientations among the members of SEKU.

We all have a shared responsibility to ensure a safe environment for all. I therefore urge all members of the SEKU community to familiarize themselves with this policy and work together towards ensuring that its provisions are implemented in full.

Dr. Sabah Ahmed Omar, Chairperson of Council

Preface by Vice-Chancellor

Gender-based violence is recognized as a fundamental violation of human rights and is detrimental to the development and success of any institution. It is increasingly becoming clear that persons of all sexes, gender, social and economic classes are possible subjects of sexual and other forms of gender-based harassment. The consequences of such violations in institutions such as the Universities include poor performance, low student enrolments, high staff turnover and a tarnished institutional image. The South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) acknowledges that it is not exempt from such vices and is thus committed to the prevention of gender-based violence. It is on this basis that the University has developed this Gender-Based Violence Prevention Policy to serve as a guideline, alongside other relevant Kenyan regulations to address gender-based violence.

To eradicate these vices and foster a respectful learning and working environment, there is need for the continuous commitment by all members of the University community. I therefore call upon all the members of SEKU to acquaint themselves with this policy and make use of the numerous resources available on campus to prevent gender-based violence.

Prof. Geoffrey M. Muluvi Ph.D, Vice-chancellor

Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	1
Definition of terms	3
Foreword by the Chairperson of Council	4
Preface by Vice-Chancellor	5
1. Preliminaries	7
(1) Introduction	7
(2) Vision, Mission, Philosophy and Core Values of South Eastern Kenya University	7
(a) Vision.....	7
(b) Mission.....	7
(c) Philosophy.....	7
(d) Core Values.....	7
(3) Policy framework	8
(4) International treaties, National laws and policies on Gender-Based violence prevention in Kenya	8
2. The Core components of the policy	9
(1) Policy Objectives and Actions	9
(2) Scope and Jurisdiction	10
(3) Prohibited conducts as regards GBV prevention	11
(a) Gender-Based Harassment	11
(b) Sexual Harassment.....	11
(c) Sexual Assault.....	11
(d) Sexual Exploitation.....	12
(e) Hostile Learning or Work Environment.....	12
(f) Psychological Harassment	12
(g) Provision of Alcohol, Drugs and/or Other Brain Function Impairing Substances for Purposes of Prohibited Conduct.....	13
(h) Retaliation.....	13
(4) Survivors and Reporting	13
(a) Support to Survivors	13
(b) Reporting and Filing a Complaint.....	14
(5) Guiding Principles for Dealing with Cases of Gender-Based Violence in SEKU	14
(a) Confidentiality.....	14
(b) Accountability.....	15
(c) Designated Authority	15
(d) Violations of Other University and State Rules	16
(e) Investigation Procedures	16
(f) Invoking other University Policies to Deal with Gender Based Violence	16
(g) Sanctions	16
(6) Resources for Dissemination of the Policy	16
(7) Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	16
3. Policy Review	16
4. Appendices	17
(I) SEKU's Beliefs on gender-based violence	17
(II) Framework for Formal Interventions for Complaint Filed Within SEKU.....	17

1. Preliminaries

(1) Introduction

South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) is a Public University which was awarded a Charter on 1st March 2013. The University is a premier institution of higher learning in the region offering various certificate, diploma and degree programmes. SEKU envisions becoming a World Class University with quality teaching, creative learning and innovative research with emphasis on agriculture, forestry, mining, energy, water and environmental sciences. The University recognizes the need to integrate gender perspectives in its operations to promote equity and equality among women and men.

(2) Vision, Mission, Philosophy and Core Values of South Eastern Kenya University

(a) Vision

To be a globally competitive centre of excellence in teaching, research, innovation and service.

(b) Mission

To provide quality education through teaching, research, extension, innovation and entrepreneurship with emphasis on agriculture, natural resources and environmental management.

(c) Philosophy

South Eastern Kenya University is transforming lives and improving the environment from arid to green through innovative teaching, research and community service.

(d) Core Values

South Eastern Kenya University's core values include professionalism, innovation, integrity, freedom of thought, teamwork, and respect for and conservation of the environment.

(3) Policy framework

Sexual and Gender-based violence are vices that both reflect and reinforce the inequities that exist between men and women. These vices compromise the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its survivors. SGBV, including sexual violence, are forms of sex discrimination that deny or limit an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from a society's resources, programs or activities. The South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) recognizes that SGBV can occur in all relationships and situations, regardless of age, disability, economic status, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender reassignment, marital status and sexual orientation. Due to this, the University understands that anyone can be a victim of gender-based violence, regardless of the above characteristics. SEKU has always endeavored to create a conducive work and learning environment free of GBV. Towards this end the university has a functional Gender mainstreaming Unit, Disability Mainstreaming Unit and Disability Mainstreaming Units which work together to address gender based violence concerns. In the 2018/19 academic year, SEKU management committed funds and technical capacity to carry out a survey to ascertain the extent and scope of gender-based violence in the University. This is a clear indicator that SEKU is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy educational and work environment in which no member of the SEKU community is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any university program or activity due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

(4) International treaties, National laws and policies on Gender-Based violence prevention in Kenya

The constitution of Kenya 2010 provides that all international and regional legislative and policy frameworks adopted and ratified by Kenya become part of the domesticated laws to fight GBV. Kenya has ratified and subscribes to many international treaties and regional conventions on elimination of GBV and gender inequality including: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1976), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC, 1989), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), UN Resolution 1325 (2000), the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (2000) among others.

The National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender based Violence 2014 seeks to ensure a coordinated approach in addressing GBV, enhance enforcement of laws and policies towards GBV prevention and response; increase in access to quality and comprehensive support services across sectors; and improved sustainability of GBV prevention and response interventions. It therefore serves as a blue print on which SEKU SGBV prevention policy is based. In addition to the National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender based Violence 2014, Kenya has other comprehensive laws,

policies and national action plans on addressing gender-based Violence as well as provision of equal rights for both gender in the public and private space. This is enshrined in Article 27 of the Kenyan constitution 2010: Equality and freedom from discrimination. Other relevant articles include those that ensure fair treatment of special vulnerable groups such articles 53 (children), 54 (persons with disabilities), 56 (minorities ad marginalized groups) and 57 (older members of the society). In similarly, there are laws that govern the treatment of causes related to gender based violence. For instance, the Sexual Offences Act, 2006 of Kenya was passed in order to deal with the problem of sexual violence. Others include the Penal code that prohibits all forms of violence in its provisions and the Children’s Act, 2001 that makes provisions for the safeguards of the rights and welfare of the children including prohibiting their sexual exploitation. Other laws include the prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2011 and the HIV control and prevention Act 2006. Some elements of gender-based violence may be covered within criminal law; however, many elements may require civic remedies, educational and administrative responses.

2. The Core components of the policy

(1) Policy Objectives and Actions

This policy aims to inform members of the University community about the institution’s stand on preventing all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and it provides impartial processes for dealing with such incidents. The policy reinforces SEKU’s commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence in a manner consistent with the University’s code of conduct and applicable statutory and legal procedures.

SEKU values all employees and students and acknowledges that they have a right to work and study in an environment that is conducive, decent, dignifying and promotes individual awareness of respect to all. The university does not therefore discriminate on the basis of sex, gender pregnancy, marital status, disability, HIV status in any of its education, employment or other programs.

(a) Policy objective 1. To increase access to quality response and support services to GBV survivors in SEKU.

To achieve this the university shall;

- i. provide avenues to encourage reporting of incidents on GBV&H and support prompt investigations;
- ii. provide timely services and interventions to help those who have been affected by discrimination;

- iii. provide an effective, sensitive and fair framework to investigate any violations of this Policy that may result in the imposition of sanctions to perpetrators.

(b) Policy objective 2. To enhance adherence to laws and policies towards GBV prevention and response

To achieve this the university shall;

- i. carry out sensitization sessions and provide relevant materials to SEKU community on what constitutes GBV & H;
- ii. provide guiding principles to prevent incidents of gender-based violence;
- iii. implement preventative interventions and train staff and students on gender-based violence;

© Policy Objective 3. To improve sustainability of GBV prevention policy and response programmes in SEKU

To achieve this the university shall;

- i. Ensure sufficient resources are allocated for capacity development and awareness creation among the SEKU community;
- ii. Continuously carry out monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of GBV prevention policy and incorporate new learnings to improve the policy;
- iii. Collaborate with other state and non-state actors for furtherance of this policy

(2) Scope and Jurisdiction

This policy applies to gender-based violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, intimate partner violence and retaliation. The policy applies to gender-based that is committed by students, faculty, staff, SEKU appointees, or third parties, whenever the misconduct occurs:

- (a) on SEKU property and mobility systems (including vehicles ferrying students to and from SEKU);
- (b) off SEKU property if the conduct was in connection with a SEKU or University-recognized program or activity (including University sponsored sports, research or internship and recreational activities);
- (c) using of University owned or provided technology resources; or

- (d) when the conduct may have the effect of creating a hostile environment for a member of the SEKU community

(3) Prohibited conducts as regards GBV prevention

In SEKU, conduct is considered unwelcoming if a person (1) did not request, consent or invite it and or it creates annoyance, and (2) is regarded as unrequested or uninvited conduct as undesirable or offensive. This policy prohibits gender-based violence or misconduct against all SEKU community members of any gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity or gender expression. Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to the following:

(a) Gender-Based Harassment

Gender-based harassment may be witnessed from verbal, nonverbal, graphic, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostile conduct based on sex, sex-stereotyping of men/women, and or negativity on sexual orientation or gender identity. When it interferes with or limits a Student's or staff ability to participate in or benefit from the University's education or work programs or activities then it needs to be reported and addressed.

(b) Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any conduct of a sexual nature, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- i. submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a condition of an individual's employment or academic standing or is used as basis for employment decisions or for academic evaluation, grading, or advancement; or future employment status of the employee;
- ii. it is direct or indirect expression of promise for preferential treatment in employment, threat of detrimental treatment in employment or threat about the present or future evaluation of student or staff performance;
- iii. such conduct is severe, persistent, or pervasive that it interferes with or limits a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the University's education or work programs or activities (hostile environment).

(c) Sexual Assault

This refers to any form of physical sexual act against any person, including any form of forced sexual intercourse or sexual contact, without consent or where the other person is incapable of giving consent due to incapacitation, work relations, or intellectual or other disability.

(d) Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation involves purposefully taking sexual advantage of another person without consent. This may include, but not limited to, the following actions: electronically recording, photographing, publishing or transmitting intimate or sexual utterances, sounds or images via any medium, without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved; prostituting another individual; exposing one's genitals to another person without consent; inducing incapacitation using drugs and substances for the purpose of making another person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity, or distributing intimate or sexual information about another person without that person's consent.

(e) Hostile Learning or Work Environment

This includes any conduct that creates a hostile working environment either through persistent or pervasive conduct or by a single severe episode. The following conduct will be deemed to defy this policy:

- i. Intimidation: this refers to cases where verbal, nonverbal, graphic, or physical moves have been used to create a hostile environment;
- ii. Demands for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised academic/job benefits, such as favorable reviews, remuneration increments, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment;
- iii. Lewd or sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendoes, or gestures;
- iv. Sharing visual or auditory records of sexual activity or nudity;
- v. Sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching;
- vi. Commenting about or inappropriately touching an individual's body or by observing, photographing, videotaping, or making other visual or auditory records of sexual activity or nudity, where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, without the knowledge and consent of all parties; or
- vii. Stalking in which an individual engages in a course of conduct toward another person under circumstances that would cause a person to fear bodily injury or experience substantial emotional distress. This may include but not limited to unwelcome acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties or follows, monitors, observes, surveys, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property. Stalking also includes the concept of cyber-stalking by use of electronic media such as the internet, social networks, blogs, cell phones, texts, or other similar devices.

(f) Psychological Harassment

Psychological harassment is defined as any unwarranted behavior in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures that affects a member of SEKU university community's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that result in a harmful

work or study environment for the said individual. As per this policy all affected individuals are encouraged to report such incidents to the authorities in SEKU.

(g) Provision of Alcohol, Drugs and/or Other Brain Function Impairing Substances for Purposes of Prohibited Conduct

This includes provision of substances such as drugs or alcohol to an individual with the intention of incapacitating the person through impairing their senses for judgment, and/or physical ability for the purpose of committing or facilitating sexually related offences.

(h) Retaliation

This refers to any adverse action taken, intimidation or threats made against a person directly or through a third part including legal counsel for reporting a prohibited conduct, facilitating or participating in an investigation for the purposes of interfering with investigations, or causing bodily/mental harm to the individual concerned. It may include maliciously and purposefully interfering with, intimidating, coercing, threatening, or damaging the academic and/or professional career of the responsible individual before, during or after the investigation and resolution of a report of the prohibited conduct. Acts of alleged retaliations should be reported immediately to the relevant offices for appropriate investigations in order to protect the concerned individuals.

(4) Survivors and Reporting

(a) Support to Survivors

Harassment requires action to confront it and report to authorities. This may constitute complainants of the alleged incident; and information about any actions the parties took immediately following the incident, including reporting the matter to other parties. SEKU has trained and professional resources for students, employees and other stakeholders, to provide support and guidance in dealing with any forms of discrimination and violence. As a first point of contact, a dedicated desk manned by a trained staff will be set up at the Gender Mainstreaming Unit to receive reports and support victims of GBV. In addition, to encourage confidential reporting for members who may be uncomfortable going for physical reporting, an online reporting tool is available through the University website that allows for anonymous reporting of the same. SEKU encourages survivors to report all instances of prohibited conduct including filing a complaints. While the University respects the complainant's autonomy in making a decision on how to deal with cases of sexual misconduct, in the event of perceived eminent harm to an individual or others, SEKU may be required to take immediate action to deal or report such conducts.

When necessary, members of the University community affected by gender based violence are strongly encouraged to seek medical advice and treatment. In addition, a medical examination following a sexual assault will aim at: first, to diagnosing and treating the full extent of any injury or physical effect (such as sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy) and second, properly collecting and preserving critical evidence. It is important to note that, for sex-related assaults, these should be reported as soon as possible since samples for evidence should be collected within a limited window of time (typically 72 to 96 hours) following an incident of sexual assault to preserve physical and other forms of evidence.

(b) Reporting and Filing a Complaint

Making a report of prohibited sexual conduct involves telling the responsible officer, verbally or in writing, about the incidence. An individual may choose to make a report either to the University and/or to external law enforcement officers such as the police or the Children's office. At the University, members are encouraged to visit and report all cases of sexual nature to the officer at a dedicated desk at the Gender Mainstreaming Unit or fill up the online reporting tool. However, it should be noted that reporting an incidence is different from filing a complaint. While reported conduct will be conveyed to the Gender Unit or any other relevant office, individuals who wish to directly file a complaint should file a formal report with the complaints office. All survivors should as much as possible avoid verbal reporting of all cases of gender-based violence. In cases where the survivor of gender-based violence is a minor and the offence has been committed by a member of the University community, within University premises or outside the campus, witnesses or guardians of such survivors should promptly report such cases to the help desk at the **Gender Mainstreaming Unit** at the University or to **state offices such as the police and children's office** for follow up and action.

When the conduct results in impairing or incapacitation of the victim as of result of drugs or alcohol intoxication or for some other reason, such as sleep or unconsciousness, then the witnesses should help in filing the report. A respondent's impairment at the time of the incident as a result of drugs or alcohol does not, however, diminish the respondent's responsibility for gender-based violence under this policy.

(5) Guiding Principles for Dealing with Cases of Gender-Based Violence in SEKU

(a) Confidentiality

While SEKU will treat information it has received with appropriate sensitivity, affected members of the University community may nonetheless need to share certain personal and confidential information with those at the University and other relevant government offices responsible for stopping or preventing gender-based violence. For example, University officers, other than those who are prohibited from reporting because of confidentiality obligation or prohibition against reporting, must promptly notify the relevant sections such as the Counseling Department, Health Unit

or Gender Mainstreaming Unit about possible gender-based violence incidents, regardless of whether a complaint is filed.

(b) Accountability

SEKU expects all members of its community to be fully accountable for their actions. Perpetrators of GBV are expected take ownership of what happens as a result of their actions and do what they can to correct their behavior. This does not mean that sanctions will not be applied on them. Intervention with those found responsible for perpetrating gender-based violence should include a focus on helping the individual take ownership for their behavior and understand the impact of their actions.

(c) Designated Authority

The SEKU senate will appoint a **standing committee** with a designated chairperson to rigorously investigate reported cases of gender-based violence. Due to the cross-cutting nature of gender-based issues, it is recommended that that the standing committee should constitute a representative from each of the following sections of the University:

- (i) Gender Mainstreaming Unit,
- (ii) Security, Legal office,
- (iii) Academics,
- (iv) Human Resources,
- (v) Catering and Accommodation Services,
- (vi) Office of the Dean of Students,
- (vii) Health Unit.,
- (viii) Disability Mainstreaming Unit
- (ix) HIV Prevention Unit

Other members such as from Transport department and Complaints Units may be co-opted on need basis. The committee will put in place mechanisms to ensure that all investigations are conducted with due regard to key principles including;

- (i) impartiality,
- (ii) objectivity,
- (iii) timelines,
- (iv) accuracy and
- (v) thoroughness.

If a case is established, a senate ad-hoc committee will be set up to hear and determine the case as well as make recommendations to the senate on the most appropriate course of action, taking into consideration the interests of all the parties concerned. Cases that might be beyond the University's

capacity and jurisdiction shall be forwarded to the relevant external law enforcement authorities with the guidance of the University's legal officer.

(d) Violations of Other University and State Rules

SEKU encourages reporting of all concerns regarding gender-based violence. Sometimes individuals are hesitant to report instances of gender-based violence because they fear they may be charged with other policy violations, such as drug and alcohol consumption within the university premises. SEKU has a paramount interest in protecting the well-being of its community and remedying gender-based violence, thus other policy violations will be considered, if necessary, separately from allegations under this Policy.

(e) Investigation Procedures

Persons with information about an incidence shall provide a written report on the matter and if possible also be interviewed. All investigations will be conducted in a discreet and confidential manner to the extent that is legally possible. The investigating committee will consider circumstances leading to the incidence, nature of the incidence, the relationship between the parties, past behaviors and the context under which the alleged incident occurred.

(f) Invoking other University Policies to Deal with Gender Based Violence

Where necessary, allegations of gender-based violence by a student or staff will be dealt with in policies under the Code of SEKU Student and staff conducts, respectively. These policies outline the processes to be followed and the rights applicable to each category of persons.

(g) Sanctions

A response to perpetrators of sexual violence can involve termination, dismissal, expulsion, reparations or restrictions depending on the circumstances as determined by the appropriate University statutes and statutory regulations.

(6) Resources for Dissemination of the Policy

The process of implementing this policy is crucial to its success in reducing cases of gender-based violence. Therefore, SEKU will provide enough resources to the Gender Mainstreaming Unit to appropriately put in place processes to reach all stakeholders.

(7) Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation will be done by the Gender Mainstreaming Unit and reported annually to the University Management.

3. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every five years, or more often, as need arises.

4. Appendices

(1) SEKU's Beliefs on gender-based violence

The University will address gender-based violence based on the following beliefs.

- i. The elimination of gender-based violence in SEKU is premised on adopting the following values: respect for all individuals, gender equality, tolerance of differences and diversity, and goodwill and accountability.
- ii. Every member of SEKU community has the right to personal dignity and bodily integrity.
- iii. The issue of gender-based violence is a serious and unacceptable social problem that must be exposed and condemned.
- iv. Sexual assault is a serious crime that is sanctioned by SEKU and Government of Kenya legal system.
- v. Every member of the SEKU community has the right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of gender-based violence.
- vi. Gender-based violence acts are used to dominate and control a person and must be exposed, condemned and punished
- vii. Personal protection and safety must be a priority on all SEKU campuses.
- viii. SEKU senior management is conscious of the fact that many sexual assaults that occur on campus are committed by an individual or individuals known to the survivor/victim and therefore frequently involve one or more members of the SEKU community.
- ix. SEKU management and the Gender Mainstreaming Unit must raise awareness in order to change attitudes regarding the myths and prejudices surrounding this issue, as well as the strong tendency to blame the victim.
- x. The entire SEKU community is responsible for believing, supporting and not laying guilt on survivors/victims of gender-based violence and for an approach intended to empower victims to take back control of their lives.
- xi. SEKU has made deliberate steps to adopt an approach that understands the prevention of gender-based violence and contributes to community responsibility and encourages collaboration to better prevent and intervene in all forms of harassment and indignity.
- xii. Victims of gender-based violence and deserve respect and empathy from all responders and should be able to obtain unbiased services.

(II) Framework for Formal Interventions for Complaint Filed Within SEKU

Formal complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the regulations in force in SEKU. When a person files a written complaint, they start a formal process. The complaints shall be dealt with impartially, equitably and fairly, and the SEKU community shall perceive this to be so.

Process

The process will be accessible, fair and efficient. A complex, laborious and overly long process will dissuade survivors/victims of gender-based violence from filing a formal complaint, even where they would be justified to do so. The policy recommends the following steps:

- (a) Step 1 (informative stage): The parties filing a complaint report should be informed of the process of dealing with complaints and the time it takes to investigate the same. In addition to providing the parties with a copy of the applicable regulations, it is important to give a form to confidentially explain the matter.
- (b) Step 2: Filing of the report: A report is filed in writing using an incident report form duly completed, dated and signed by the alleged victim and guardian or witness for the case of minors or unresponsive victim. The form must be brief and limited to essential information necessary to deal with the complaint. An officer at the Gender reporting Desk will support and help the victim, wherever necessary, to complete the form. The time limit for filing a report must be short enough to permit the checking of facts as part of an investigation, and long enough to minimize the risks of reprisals on the victim.
- (c) Step 3: Admissibility: Evaluation of the admissibility of a complaint report alleging sexual violence will be done by the Senate standing committee appointed based on the criteria set out in the institution's regulations and in accordance with SEKU provisions regarding harassment. If the complaint is deemed admissible, the case will proceed to full deliberations by the committee.
- (d) Step 4: Handling of the complaint: In this policy, it is desirable that all cases related to gender-based violence be handled solely by the designated Senate standing committee - not by any other a person such as those responsible for informal interventions. This is essential to preserve the neutrality of the designated resource and allows the latter to continue to provide support to both parties involved while procedures are ongoing. During the processing of the reported cases, the complainants and defendants must be kept informed of progress of the process and the associated timeline for the investigations. It is recommended that the processing of the complains should not take longer than two months. SEKU will make sure that those mandated to handle formal complaints have the necessary skills and integrity and must also watch for the risks of conflict of interest.
- (e) Step 5: Hearing and Determination of the case: In the event that a case is established, a senate ad hoc committee will be set up to hear and determine the case as well as make

recommendations to the senate on the most appropriate course of action, taking into consideration the interests of all the parties concerned.

- (f) Step 6: Counselling: Experiencing GBV is a very traumatic experience. The survivor will be taken through a counselling process to promote their self-esteem and resilience
- (g) Step 7: Other steps: These include coordinating procedures for the handling of appeals, setting up a mediation process if the parties wish; collaborate in establishing prevention and accommodation measures as needed; follow up with the victim and the defendant; receive the investigation report and recommendation for final communication. Cases that might be beyond the University's capacity and jurisdiction shall be forwarded to the relevant external law enforcement authorities, with the guidance of the University's legal officer.