



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND TOXICOLOGICAL RESEARCH (PUTOR)

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ABUSE AND RELATED OFFENCE POLICY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PUTOR: An introduction
2. The context: Women’s Position in Nigeria
3. Rational for Gender-based violence, sexual abuse and physical harassment policy in PUTOR
4. Gender-based violence, sexual abuse and physical harassment policy:
 - Goal/objectives
 - Components
5. Gender strategies
 - 5.1. Organizational level
 - 5.2. Programs and stakeholders’ level
 - 5.3. Mechanism to ensure gender equity both at the internal and external Level.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF UNIPOINT AND PUTOR

Background

Health systems played a key role in the dramatic rise in global life expectancy during the 20th century and still contribute enormously to the improvement in population health. A multi-disciplinary health workforce is the backbone of each health system that facilitates the smooth implementation of health actions for sustainable socio-economic development. Furthermore, the direct effect of crude oil prospecting and exploration had left some deleterious consequences on the ecosystem and public health in all the countries in this region. The way of life of the people, which are largely aquatic, has been completely destroyed. More recently, there had been a 'double air pollution burden' in the city of Port Harcourt. The persistence of black soot over the city is partly the result of oil exploration, meteorological changes, criminal activities of artisanal crude oil refiners, poor environmental regulatory activities and the dearth of strategic knowledge resource to combat these preventable catastrophes.

Adequately trained and highly skills health workforce would play a major role in tackling the public health and environmental issues with oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger delta region of Nigeria as well as contiguous areas in the Gulf of Guinea. Environmental degradation, especially the swamps, rivers and creeks from oil spills, pipeline vandalism and illegal refining activities are the major fall outs of the oil and gas industry in the Niger Delta region. This affects the health and livelihood of the people who depend on the ecosystem services for survival, leading to increased poverty and hunger. The problem is compounded by the paucity of highly skilled and motivated health professionals who are equipped with current knowledge, skills and competencies required for conducting cutting-edge research in public health, toxicology, nutrition and nursing that would help mitigate the public health issues arising from oil and gas exploration in the region

PUTOR is a World Bank funded Africa Centre of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research. It is a platform for providing inter-disciplinary academic stream of postgraduate programmes and rapidly bridge the current paucity of adequately trained personnel with terminal degrees in public health, toxicology, nutrition and midwifery/child health nursing in sub-Saharan Africa.

Programme Goal: The Centre will develop high calibre manpower with the requisite teaching skills and research abilities, to handle the public health and environmental challenges hindering sustainable development in regions of Africa where oil and gas activities are on-going

PUTOR'S Mission: To provide a platform to congregate highly skilled human resource both within and outside the university of Port Harcourt; build a robust resource of highly skilled and motivated public health professionals who are equipped with current knowledge, skills and competencies required to improve the practice of public health, nutrition, toxicology and midwifery/child health nursing; produce cutting –edge research projects to solve public health issues arising from oil and gas sectors and undertake consultancy and community services.

PUTOR'S Vision: To be a centre of excellence in providing highly sought-after, world-class academic and professional programmes which are recognised for local relevance, international excellence and global impact in the field of public health, toxicology, nutrition and midwifery/child health nursing.

Specific Objectives of the Centre include the

- 1) Training of students and technical experts/policymakers through short courses on relevant

public health and toxicological issues in the region.

- 2) Training national and regional masters' students in the focused areas
- 3) Training national and regional students to obtain PhDs in the focused areas.
- 4) Developing regional research capacity to support focused interventions on developmental challenges

Methodology

Philosophically, all programmes in PUTOR are designed with the need to promote equity, excellence and integrity. These are premised on developing the knowledge, skills and competences of students from diverse academic backgrounds to becoming industry-ready professionals. The specific strategies applicable to each module as stated in the description of the module are based on the needs to enhance students' participation based on recognised learning styles. A period of internship in the relevant industry/sector is mandatory and newer pedagogical techniques built around blended learning, competency-based learning and self-directed learning are applied. New programmes leading to Masters and PhDs will be developed while some of the existing ones are being substantially reviewed with the involvement of the broad stakeholders and partners. The Centre and the collaborating units in the University will be responsible for programme coordination. We aim to attract regional students of which 30% will be female students and within the first two years attract both local and international accreditations for these programmes as such; they are tailored to meet specific regional development needs and bear global relevance. All activities of the Centre have strong value propositions that will eventually translate into developing high-flying public health professionals that are equipped to solve local problems. All staff will be trained on the newer pedagogical and applied research methodologies that will be deployed. Faculty and students will be recruited from the West African region to build regional capacity and collaboration.

Centre management and governance

The details of the Centre's coordination and management structure built around a multi-level structure can be found in the Centre's Implementation manual or in the website – www.aceputoruniport.edu.ng. this consist of the following:

1. The International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB)
2. The Industry Advisory Board
3. The Centre Management Committee
4. The Academic Board
5. The Applied Research Coordinating Team

The entire PUTOR ecosystem is intrinsically linked with the entire systems operational in the University of Port Harcourt

2. The context: Women's Position in Nigeria

The women in Nigeria are extremely disadvantaged in terms of social and economic development indicators. Their low status in the society is due to low literacy rates, life expectancy, and most importantly lack of access to economic and informational resources. In Nigeria patriarchy finds expression in the perceived notions of female dependence and

subordination. The practice of patriarchy creates in the minds of woman, whether mother, wife or daughter, a feeling of worthlessness, servitude and dependence within the family. The role of women is characterized by lack of freedom and limit individual development. The existing inequality is deemed to be the outcome of specific social institutions designed to restrain their power: namely, segregation and legal subordination in the family and social structure.

The biological or physical difference between man and woman is often interpreted in accordance with the patriarchal notion that men are superior to women. Patriarchal ideology influences and shapes the sexual division of labor where work is allocated on the basis of sex, within both the home and the workplace. The son is viewed as the sole supporter of his parents in their old age. A daughter on the other hand, merits an altogether different treatment. As a result of the prevailing negative attitude towards the female sex, it is common for mothers -to-be in Nigeria to suffer from the anxiety over the sex of the unborn child. The desire for sons is so intense that the birth of a daughter can have serious consequences on the marriage itself.

The UNDP Gender-related development index (GDI) ranks Nigeria at 139th position out of 157 countries (UNDP 2008). This poor ranking is the result of the relatively low index value arising from the low literacy rates and the low share of earned income of women compared to men.

Although, in recent years some attempts were made to bring women into the mainstream of events in Nigeria, they are yet to be incorporated in any significant numbers in the decision-making structures of the country. Women hold less than thirty five percent of senior positions in the civil service and their representation at the senior levels of the executive, legislature and judiciary is marginal. In terms of ownership of land and assets, men at all levels of society are better off than women, a significant portion of the people living in absolute poverty being women. Households headed by women are among the poorest in the country with 45 percent of female-headed households living below the poverty line.

Gender-based violence, which often stems from existing socio-cultural attitudes that regard women as inferior to men, take place in various forms that include wife beating, rape, acid-throwing, trafficking, sexual coercion and harassment, as well as verbal and psychological abuse. Gender-based violence when it relates to women and girls is reported to be one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world which undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of the victims who are most often women (UNFPA, 2019)

Despite some progress made in recent years, women in Nigeria continue to suffer severe forms of discrimination. In a culture that places greater value on boys than on girls, women experience discrimination and relative deprivation at every stage of their life cycle. They enjoy fewer rights and have access to fewer opportunities compared to their male counterparts. Women consequently have lower literacy rates, lower incomes, fewer assets and less access to productive resources. Women also experience higher levels of malnutrition and morbidity, female morbidity being 14 percent higher than male. This difference is most pronounced during women's reproductive age (15- 49 years), when morbidity for women is 38 percent higher than for men. (UN, Nigeria, 2000)

3. Rational for Gender and related offence policy in PUTOR

PUTOR considers women as the gateway of bringing any change within the family and community level and so has taken efforts to direct resources and services to them. PUTOR 's focus on women is also based on the assumption that women are the main change agents both at the family and community level. Therefore, PUTOR has to address their basic needs and upgrade their economic condition to improve their overall status in the family and community they live in. PUTOR realized that women's mobility, decision-making power, access to resources are all controlled by men in their households and therefore redistribution of power through economic, social and political empowerment of women is essential to bring changes in the status of women.

The Centre of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research (PUTOR), recognises that gender inequality has the potential to limit and impact negatively on the safety, education, employment, family lives and opportunities of staff and students, particularly women and girls, in the immediate and long term.

The Centre of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research (PUTOR), recognises that gender inequality is both structural and individual; this means it is not only the result of individual attitudes and actions, but also of biases in structures, systems, policies and processes throughout our community.

The Centre of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research (PUTOR), recognises that schools are vital spaces in our community to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. Every policy, practice and activity have the potential to reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and gendered inequality.

PUTOR strongly believes that the vital force of every organization is its people who engage in a collective effort to achieve a specific set of objectives. It is they who make the organization a living entity. Keeping this in mind, PUTOR is constantly trying to increase the number of women at all levels of its projects. It was found in a research that once a critical mass of about 30-35% women in the organization, including at decision-making levels, has been achieved the organization as a whole becomes more accountable to the specific needs and interests of women.

PUTOR, University of Port Harcourt Reaffirmation of Commitment to Equal Educational & Employment Opportunity

The Centre of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research (**PUTOR**), University of Port Harcourt is committed to and will provide equality of educational and employment opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, marital status, pregnancy, or veteran status – except where sex, age, or ability represent bona fide educational or employment qualifications or where marital or veteran status are statutorily defined eligibility criteria for Federal or State benefit programs.

The Centre of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research (**PUTOR**), is committed to creating a school community where all staff and students are equally respected and valued and enjoy equity of both opportunity and outcomes.

This affirmation is published in accordance with Article 17: Equality and Protection from Discrimination in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Centre aims to achieve, within all areas of the university community, a diverse student body, faculty, and staff capable of providing for excellence in the education of its students and for the enrichment of the university community.

Statement on Diversity in the Centre

The Centre strives to foster and sustain an environment of inclusiveness that empowers us all to achieve our highest potential without fear of prejudice or bias. We commit ourselves to building an exemplary educational community that offers a nurturing and challenging intellectual climate, a respect for the spectrum of human diversity, and a genuine understanding of the many differences-including race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, disability, religion or national origin -that enrich a vibrant metropolitan research Centre. We expect every member of our academic family to embrace the underlying values of this vision and to demonstrate a strong commitment to attracting, retaining and supporting students, faculty and staff who reflect the diversity of our larger society.

Unlawful Harassment, Personal Discrimination, and Retaliation

The Centre’s gender-based discriminatory, sexual abuse and physical harassment Policy reflects the commitment to maintain a community that is free from harassment of any kind. Harassment of any kind is not acceptable. It is inconsistent with the university's commitment to excellence and respect for all individuals. The university is also committed to protecting the academic freedom and freedom of expression of all members of the university community. Academic freedom and freedom of expression includes, but is not limited to, the expression of ideas, however controversial, in the classroom, residence hall, and in keeping with different responsibilities, in work places elsewhere in the university community. The Centre strives to provide equal employment opportunity on the basis of merit and without unlawful discrimination in terms of race, sex, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, pregnancy, or disability of an otherwise qualified individual. The Centre shall make every reasonable effort to select all staff from applicant pools which are representative of the labor market in terms of sex, disability and tribe. Furthermore, the Centre shall not subject employees to unlawful discrimination in terms of compensation, benefits, and/or working conditions.

For more information concerning ways in which our multicultural learning community may be nurtured and protected or complaint resolution procedures, contact the Dean of Student Affairs.

Guiding principles followed in formulating PUTOR's gender and related offence policy

- A focus on gender rather than women implies not looking at 'women' and women's issues in isolation but recognizing the different needs and interests of women and men in the context of power relations between them.
- A gender analysis of an organization examines the processes and interventions in and by the organization in terms of their effects on women, men and the relationships between women and men. It explicitly recognizes the unequal gender relations between men and women in society.
- Gender equality means equality between women and men at various levels: equal material welfare, equal access to resources and opportunities, a value system based on the belief in equality, equal participation in decision-making, and equal control over resources and benefits.

4. Gender Policy:

4.1. Gender Policy Goal/Objectives:

- To ensure a gender friendly environment within **PUTOR**'s ecosystem, programs and projects will be based on clear understanding on gender relations, roles and identities.
- Incorporating the concept of gender relations, roles and identities in designing and implementing program and project.

4.2. Gender Policy Components

4.2.1 Organizational Level

4.2.2 Program Level

4.2.3 Stakeholders Level

5.1. Organizational Level:

5.1.1 Governance (General Council and Governing Board)

5.1.2 Recruitment

5.1.3 Structure

5.1.4 Work Load

5.1.5 Staff Development

5.1.6 Staff Promotion and Transfer

5.1.7 Leave

5.1.8 Compensation Package

5.1.9 Transport Facilities

5.1.10 Child Care

5.1.11 Staff Counseling

5.1.12 Staff Safety

5.1.13 Others

5. Gender Strategies and Approaches:

5.1 Organizational Level:

At PUTOR, all students and staff are responsible for promoting gender equality and modelling respectful relationships. Promoting gender equality and modelling respectful relationships is just as important for staff as it is for students. All staff and students will be held accountable if they use language and/or demonstrate behaviour that:

- promotes unequal power relations between women and men
- perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes
- condones violence against women.

PUTOR will work to ensure all staff feel respected, safe and valued in the workplace, and will take proactive measures to prevent and eliminate gender discrimination and provide equal opportunities for all staff. This will include promoting gender equality in school leadership, ensuring processes and policies are free of bias, and supporting all staff to balance work and family commitments.

PUTOR will support staff who experience domestic/family violence or sexual assault including by making reasonable efforts to grant appropriate leave, adjust work assignments or accommodate requests for flexible work hours.

These strategies will be achieved through the following organisational arrangements:

5.1.1 Governance

5.1.1.1 In the General Council and the Governing Board of **PUTOR** there should be representation of women and men at least at 3:7 ratios.

5.1.1.2 There will be a gender advisor from Governing Board who will be responsible to see organizational gender issues. Gender core team is reportable to him/her about the practice of organizational gender policy. A yearly gender audit report will be prepared and submitted to the Advisor.

5.1.2 Management Position:

- To Encourage and creating scope to bring women at every level of management.
- A 3-member core team heading by a convener will be formed to ensure the practice of organizational gender policy. This committee will look after organizational gender needs and other related needs of all staff.
- A gender Audit will be done by this team every year and report will be submitted to **PUTOR** governing board via advisor.

5.1.3 Recruitment:

- Using flexible terms and conditions for recruiting women staff.
- Special preference will be given to women candidates in the coming five years.
- Recruitment board will be constituted taking both women and men.

- Providing preference to a woman candidate over a male candidate when both of them are found equally competent.
- Recruit women candidate having lower education in some specific cases
- Recruiting advertisement will be made encouraging of women to apply.

5.1.4 Work Load:

- Same workload will be applicable for both male and female staff.
- Nature of job will be similar for the same position of the male and female staff.
- Workload will be reduced for female staff for their special time.
- Working distance in the specific field will be considered for female staff where the working field is scattered by consultation of other field staffs.

5.1.5 Staff Development:

- Equal opportunity for career development for male and female staff.
- Provide awareness to all staff about PUTOR's gender policy.
- Provide awareness on recent gender issues to all staff.
- Provide special training for enhancing their skills.
- Facilitate dialogue among staffs in every branch office on gender related issues through workshops and seminars.
- Introduce a Gender Audit Committee (GAC) to address the special needs/problems of women staff in PUTOR as well as organize gender workshops for them.

5.1.6 Staff promotion and Transfer:

- Preference will be given to a woman staff, if found competent, to promote in the next higher position.
- Transfer is applicable for both male and female staff. However, practical needs of women staff will be considered while transferring them.
- Organizational staff will be given privilege to apply to the higher position of the org. while a new recruitment will be made.

5.1.7 Leave:

- All staff will have equal access to general leave and benefits. However, the women staff will have maternity leave (91 days) and male staff will have paternity leave (twenty-one days).
- Breast Feeding: Female staff will have one hour leave from her office duty during the first year of childbearing period. This facility will be applicable up to two children.

5.1.8. Compensation Package:

- All staff at the same grade will have same level of salary structure.

- Scholarship positions will be shared equally between male and female applicants such that if six positions exist in a particular year, three would be reserved for female students.
- Priority would be given to female regional and national students in the allocation of available accommodation spaces

5.1.9 Transport Facilities:

- Women staff will be allowed to use taxi instead of riding motorcycle in culture sensitive rural areas.

5.1.10 Child-Care:

- Develop a child-care center for the children of the staff (if there is need)

5.1.11 Staff Counseling:

- Encourages an open and participatory environment.
- Women's voice will be given due importance in meeting and decision-making process.
- Ensure an environment, free from sexual harassment (which includes physical, verbal and non-verbal).
- PUTOR will maintain a strict defined principle to deal with the cases of sexual harassment.
- PUTOR will follow an open-door policy to ensure access to the management by the staff at any level.
- Incorporate gender sensitivity as one component of staff performance evaluation.
- Primarily Unit In charge will be responsible to see gender issues of all staff especially sexual harassment and other safety issues. Moreover, there will be one person with whom the staff can openly talk and share about gender issues. Selected staff should be widely acceptable to other project staff. She/he will work as the gender focal point. He/She will be reportable to the convener of the gender core team.

5.1.12 Staff Safety:

- Provide required support/assistance to women staff in work especially during night travel and evening work.
- Allow flexibility for female staff during pregnancy and lactation period.
- There will be a provision for every staff to inform about his/her sexual harassment issue in a written form directly to the convener of gender core team.
- At the field level Unit In charge will be responsible to ensure the security of every staff.

5.1.13 Respectful Treatment:

PUTOR Management believes that all individuals in the workplace have the right to be treated in a respectful and courteous manner. While we recognized that everyone is human and may have

an occasional lapse, a pattern of disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated. Examples of behaviour that might be construed as disrespectful are:

- Shouting
- Swearing
- Reprimanding someone in front of others
- Using a condescending or derogatory tone with someone.
- Intentionally hurtful and unprofessional emails

The ability to effectively and respectfully work with colleagues is a requirement of all positions; therefore, violations of this policy will be treated as serious performance deficiencies.

Harassment Policy: Harassment involves a range of behavior that are deemed to be offensive or unreasonable in nature. It is the policy of PUTOR to ensure that all employees work in a positive and productive work environment free of harassment. All individuals should be treated with dignity and respect, and actions that may be viewed as harassment are unacceptable. It is in conflict with this policy for any employee, male or female, to harass another employee by:

1. Making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, a basis or condition for employment or continued employment, or
2. Making submission, or rejections of, such conduct the basis for assessment or employment decisions (vacations, promotions, schedules, etc) affecting the student or employee, or
3. Creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment by such conduct, or
4. Making such advances, requests or conduct having the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or study performance.
5. Harassment does not have to be sexual in nature to be prohibited by this policy. PUTOR prohibits harassment of any kind. Harassment may be defined as visual, verbal, or physical conduct designed to threaten, bully, intimidate, or coerce. Verbal taunting (including racial and ethnic slurs) which, in the affected employee's opinion impairs his or her ability to perform his or her job is included in this definition.

An employee who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment should report this immediately and directly to his/her supervisor or the Centre leader. Such matters will be held in the strictest confidence possible, pending further investigation. Any supervisor, employee, or agent for PUTOR who has been found, after appropriate investigation, to have harassed another employee, will be subject to appropriate action, which may include discharge.

Substance Abuse Policy and the Drug-Free Workplace Act: PUTOR is committed to providing its employees with a safe workplace, and to promoting high standards of employee health. Consistent with the spirit and intent of this commitment, a formal policy has been established regarding drug and alcohol abuse.

While PUTOR has no intention of intruding into the private lives of its employees, it is recognized that off-the-job as well as on-the-job involvement with drugs and alcohol has an impact on the work place. Consequently, our policy is as follows:

Employees are expected and required to work in appropriate mental and physical condition for work. It is our intent and obligation to provide a drug-free, healthful, safe and secure work environment.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance on company premises or while conducting the organization's business off its premises is absolutely prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may have legal consequences.

The organization recognizes dependency as an illness and a major health problem. The organization also recognizes drug abuse as a potential health, safety and security problem. Conscientious efforts to seek such help will not jeopardize any employee's job and will not be noted in any personnel record.

Employees must, as a condition of employment, abide by the terms of the above policy and report to management any conviction under a State or Federal criminal drug statute for violations occurring on organization's premises or off its premises while conducting its business. A report of a conviction must be made within five (five) days after the conviction.

5.1.13 Others:

- Gender practical needs will be considered. For example, female staff during their menstruation period will be allowed to do deskwork for 3 days.

5.2 Programs and Stakeholders Level:

- Screen all programs/projects through genders lenses.
- Improve women's access to information by using various media.
- Address the special needs of women and children during emergency relief operations.
- Empower women through capacity building.
- Impart education on democracy and encourage women to participate in local elections. Therefore, consciousness will be given to the program stakeholders in the socio-economic and political issues.
- Provide legal aid support in partnership with other relevant organizations working on women's legal rights.
- Promote women's control over credit and income utilization and participation in family decision-making.
- Enhance women's confident and social dignity.
- Ensure women's access to safe health practice and services.

- Organize women through instituting.

5.3. Internal and external strategy to ensure gender equity:

- Conduct internal gender audit of all its programs and projects.
- Support movements, which uphold women interest.
- Protest any anti-women declarations and actions.
- Maintains strategic alliance with key actors in the field of gender, such as women's organization or other organizations with gender expertise.

5.4 PUTOR's provisions to enhance gender equity

PUTOR will make deliberate provisions for women in the various programmes in line with the strategies and policies of the host institution. Some of these provisions include:

- Preferential admission approach to guarantee realisation of the male and female, national and regional students' ratio.
- Provision of hostel accommodation for all female students
- Differential scholarship programme for female enrolees
- Additional support backed by extant public policy on maternity leave
- Provision of creche and day-care facilities for breastfeeding mothers in academic career
- The host University has a policy against sexual discrimination, gender bias and all forms of discrimination against women

6.0 Indicators for monitoring compliance on gender equity

The gender policy and strategy would be monitored and result provided in the centre's periodic report card for gender equality. Some of the indicators that would be used to monitor compliance to this policy include:

- What proportion of the Centre's Masters Students is female?
- What proportion of the Centre's PhD students is female?
- What proportion of the Centre's faculty (graduate assistants, assistant lecturer, lecturer II, lecturer I, senior lecturer, reader and professor) is female?
- What proportion of female faculty was sponsored for conferences/internship etc in the last one year?
- What proportion of headship of internal committees/units/courses/programmes is female?
- What proportion of the Centre's tenured faculty members that were newly recruited in the last one year from outside the institution was female?
- What proportion of external examiners invited for the defence of the students' dissertation is female?
- What proportion of reported cases of gender-linked violence, sexual abuse and physical harassments have been dealt with in the last one year.

7.0 Other

- Promote exchange, dialogue and openness regarding gender issues

- Records of organizational work in the field of gender and making them accessible for the staff.
- Accommodate organizational learning on gender issues.

8.0 Enforcement

The complaint mechanism involves sending confidential reports on gender-based violence and related offences to the line supervisor, the Centre's students' support officer or in rare cases the Centre leader. Investigations into such reports will commence within 48 hours and corroborated reports of gender violence, sexual abuse and physical harassment will be dealt with decisively by the Centre management and the University's authority. The penalties may range from disciplinary warning, suspension or outright dismissal and prosecution under the Nigerian legal system. The University's guidance and counseling team would also be involved in the rehabilitation of victims of gender-based violence and related offences.