CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Cyprus International University (CIU) maintains a learning, teaching, research, and working environment founded on dignity, respect, equality, and safety for all members of its diverse international community.

As a multicultural university hosting students and staff from different countries, languages, cultures, and beliefs, CIU recognizes that:

- Bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct undermine academic freedom, institutional integrity, and human wellbeing.
- A safe campus environment is essential for effective teaching, research productivity, and student success.
- Prevention of misconduct is a shared responsibility aligned with:
  -United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Safe Working Environments)
  -SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
  -International higher-education safeguarding standards.
- Universities must model ethical workplaces where power is exercised responsibly, particularly in staff-student and supervisory relationships.

1.2 This Policy therefore aims to:

a) Prevent misconduct before it occurs through education, awareness, and institutional culture.
b) Provide clear definitions and behavioural expectations for all members of CIU.
c) Establish accessible, confidential, and fair reporting systems.
d) Ensure timely, impartial investigations that protect all parties.
e) Offer support mechanisms for individuals affected by misconduct.
f) Promote accountability and transparency while safeguarding confidentiality.
g) Strengthen CIU's commitment to being a safe international academic environment attractive to global students and scholars.
h) Demonstrate CIU's compliance with international sustainability and ethical employment benchmarks used in global university rankings.

2. SCOPE

2.1 Persons Covered by This Policy

This Policy applies to all individuals engaged in CIU-related activities, including:

- Academic staff (full-time, part-time, visiting lecturers)
- Administrative and technical staff
- Researchers and project personnel
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students

- Interns, trainees, and exchange students
- Contractors, outsourced workers, and service providers
- Alumni participating in university programmes
- Visitors attending CIU events or activities

2.2 Locations Where the Policy Applies

This Policy applies to behaviour occurring:

✓ On all CIU campuses and facilities
✓ In classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and offices
✓ In student residences and social spaces
✓ During internships, practicums, and fieldwork placements
✓ At conferences, study visits, and university travel
✓ At university-sponsored events (formal or informal)
✓ In digital environments connected to CIU, including:
- Email communication
- Learning Management Systems (e.g., Moodle)
- Online classes or meetings
- Social media interactions related to university life

2.3 Behavioural Jurisdiction

This Policy applies regardless of whether misconduct occurs:

- During working hours or outside them,
- On or off campus,
- Within hierarchical relationships (e.g., supervisor–staff, lecturer–student),
- Between peers,
- In person or through digital communication.

Where conduct impacts the CIU environment or reputation, the University reserves the right to take action even if the behaviour occurred off-site.

2.4 Relationship to Other University Regulations

This Policy operates in conjunction with:

- CIU Human Resources regulations
- Student Disciplinary Code
- Research Ethics policies
- Occupational Health and Safety procedures
- Internship and placement agreements

Where overlap exists, this Policy provides the primary safeguarding framework for addressing interpersonal misconduct.

2.5 Institutional Commitment

CIU affirms that:

- No individual shall face retaliation for raising a concern in good faith.
- Cultural differences cannot justify behaviour that violates dignity or safety.
- Prevention is achieved through education, leadership accountability, and community responsibility, not only disciplinary action.

3. POLICY

Cyprus International University (CIU) is committed to maintaining a university environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect. The University adopts a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct in all forms.

Such behaviours are incompatible with CIU's academic values, international character, and its responsibility to provide a safe environment for education, research, and employment.

3.1 Statement of Principle

CIU affirms that:

- Every member of the University community has the right to work, study, and interact in an environment free from intimidation, hostility, humiliation, exploitation, or abuse.
- Misconduct will be addressed promptly, fairly, and consistently, regardless of the position or status of those involved.
- Power imbalances inherent in academic settings—such as lecturer–student, supervisor–researcher, or manager–employee relationships—must never be misused.
- Prevention of misconduct is a shared institutional responsibility requiring awareness, education, and accountability.

3.2 Prohibited Conduct

The University strictly prohibits:

3.2.1 Bullying

Repeated behaviour that intimidates, degrades, or undermines another person.

3.2.2 Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to personal characteristics that creates an offensive or hostile environment.

3.2.3 Sexual Harassment

Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, or conduct of a sexual nature.

3.2.4 Sexual Misconduct

Including sexual assault, coercion, stalking, exploitation, or non-consensual sharing of intimate material.

3.2.5 Abuse of Authority

Using academic or administrative power to pressure, influence, or control another individual improperly.

3.2.6 Retaliation

Any adverse treatment of a person for reporting or participating in a complaint process.

3.3 Institutional Responsibilities

CIU will:

- Provide clear reporting channels that are confidential and accessible.
- Respond to complaints in a timely, impartial, and trauma-informed manner.
- Implement protective measures where needed to ensure safety.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action when violations are substantiated.
- Deliver regular training and awareness programmes for staff and students.
- Monitor institutional climate to identify risks and improve prevention strategies.

3.4 Individual Responsibilities

All members of the CIU community are expected to:

- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with respect, professionalism, and inclusion.
- Refrain from behaviour that may constitute bullying, harassment, or misconduct.
- Report concerns or incidents they experience or witness.
- Cooperate honestly in any investigation.
- Support a culture of accountability and mutual respect.

3.5 Confidentiality and Fairness

CIU is committed to safeguarding the privacy of individuals involved in reports while ensuring a fair and transparent process. Information will be shared only where necessary to investigate, resolve, or comply with legal obligations.

3.6 Non-Retaliation Commitment

Retaliation against any person who raises a concern in good faith is strictly prohibited and will be treated as a serious disciplinary violation, regardless of the outcome of the original complaint.

3.7 Alignment with Institutional Values and International Standards

This Policy reflects CIU's commitment to:

- Ethical academic governance
- International human rights principles
- Safe and equitable workplaces under Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work)
- Gender equality and inclusive education standards

4. DEFINITIONS OF MISCONDUCT

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions shall apply. These definitions are intended to provide clarity and consistency in interpretation and enforcement.

4.1 Misconduct

Misconduct refers to any behaviour, action, or omission that violates the standards of conduct expected within Cyprus International University (CIU), including actions that compromise the dignity, safety, equality, or wellbeing of another person, or that undermine the integrity of the University environment.

Misconduct may occur through:

- Verbal, non-verbal, physical, written, or digital communication;
- Direct interaction or indirect behaviour;
- A single serious incident or repeated conduct over time.

4.2 Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an individual or group that creates a risk to health, safety, or wellbeing.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- Persistent criticism, ridicule, or humiliation;

- Verbal abuse, shouting, or offensive language;
- Deliberate exclusion from academic or professional activities;
- Assigning tasks with the intent to demean or set the individual up to fail;
- Withholding necessary information or resources;
- Abuse of supervisory or evaluative authority;
- Spreading malicious rumours or undermining reputation.

A single incident of severe intimidation may also constitute bullying where its impact is significant.

4.3 Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Harassment may relate to, but is not limited to:

- Gender or gender identity
- Nationality or ethnic origin
- Religion or belief
- Language or cultural background
- Age
- Disability
- Marital or family status
- Socioeconomic background
- Any other personal characteristic

Harassment can occur even where there was no intention to offend, if the conduct would reasonably be perceived as offensive.

4.4 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, or physical, that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or humiliating environment.

Examples include:

- Sexual comments, jokes, or innuendo;
- Unwanted touching or physical proximity;
- Repeated requests for dates or personal contact after refusal;
- Displaying sexually suggestive images or materials;
- Sending messages of a sexual nature electronically;
- Making academic or employment decisions contingent upon sexual cooperation (quid pro quo).

4.5 Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct encompasses a range of behaviours involving non-consensual sexual activity or exploitation, including:

- Sexual assault or attempted assault;
- Coercion, pressure, or manipulation into sexual activity;
- Sexual exploitation or abuse of vulnerability;
- Stalking of a sexual nature;
- Recording, sharing, or distributing intimate images without consent;
- Engaging in sexual conduct where there is an imbalance of power (e.g., staff–student relationships) that compromises genuine consent.
- Sexual misconduct may occur regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or relationship status.

4.6 Consent

Consent is a clear, voluntary, and informed agreement to engage in a specific activity.

Consent must be:

- Freely given, without coercion, manipulation, or pressure;
- Active and explicit, not assumed from silence or lack of resistance;
- Ongoing and may be withdrawn at any time;
- Given by a person with the capacity to make that decision.
- Consent is not valid where:
- A person is under threat, intimidation, or undue influence;
- There is significant impairment due to alcohol, drugs, or other conditions;
- There is an abuse of authority or dependency relationship.

4.7 Abuse of Authority

Abuse of authority occurs when an individual uses their institutional position, power, or influence improperly to control, pressure, disadvantage, or exploit another person.

Examples include:

- Requesting personal or sexual favours in exchange for academic or professional benefit;
- Influencing grades, evaluations, or employment conditions unfairly;
- Creating dependency relationships for personal gain.
- 4.8 Retaliation
- Retaliation refers to any adverse action taken against an individual because they:
- Reported or intended to report misconduct;
- Participated in an investigation;
- Supported or acted as a witness.

- Retaliation includes intimidation, exclusion, negative evaluations, threats, or any conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from raising concerns.
- Retaliation is considered a serious and independent violation of this Policy.

4.9 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated unfairly or subjected to disadvantage because they have made a complaint, asserted their rights, or refused to participate in inappropriate conduct.

4.10 Online or Digital Misconduct

Misconduct conducted through electronic means shall be treated with equal seriousness as in-person behaviour. This includes:

- Harassing emails or messages;
- Sharing offensive or explicit content;
- Cyberbullying;
- Unauthorized recording of online classes or meetings;
- Misuse of digital platforms to target individuals.

4.11 Third-Party Misconduct

This Policy also applies to misconduct committed by or against:

- Contractors,
- Visitors,
- External partners,
- Placement supervisors.
- CIU reserves the right to restrict access, terminate agreements, or take other appropriate action in response.

5. INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Cyprus International University (CIU) is committed to ensuring that all reports of bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct are addressed through a process that is fair, impartial, timely, and respectful of the rights and dignity of all parties involved.

Investigations shall follow the principles of natural justice, confidentiality, proportionality, and procedural fairness.

5.1 Reporting of Allegations

A complaint may be submitted through any of the following channels:

- Online confidential reporting system;

- Human Resources Directorate;
- Student Affairs Office;
- Designated Safeguarding or Ethics Officer;
- Head of Department or Supervisor (who must forward the report promptly);
- Anonymous reporting mechanisms (where available).

Reports may be made by:

- The affected individual (Complainant);
- A witness;
- A third party acting in good faith.

5.2 Initial Assessment

Upon receipt of a report, CIU shall conduct an initial assessment within five (5) working days to determine:

- Whether the allegation falls within the scope of this Policy;
- Whether immediate protective or interim measures are required;
- The appropriate pathway (informal resolution, formal investigation, or referral to external authorities if required by law).

This stage does not determine guilt or responsibility.

5.3 Interim Protective Measures

Where necessary, CIU may implement precautionary measures to safeguard individuals and prevent further harm, including:

- No-contact directives;
- Temporary reassignment of duties;
- Adjustments to class schedules or supervision arrangements;
- Restricted access to certain facilities;
- Academic accommodations;
- Referral to counselling or support services.

Such measures are administrative and do not constitute disciplinary action.

5.4 Formal Investigation

Where a formal investigation is warranted, CIU shall appoint a trained and impartial investigator or investigation panel with no conflict of interest.

The investigation shall include:

1 Written Notice

- The Respondent shall be informed of the allegations in writing and given an opportunity to respond.

2 Collection of Evidence

- Interviews with the Complainant, Respondent, and relevant witnesses;
- Review of documents, correspondence, or digital records;
- Consideration of contextual or expert information where necessary.

3 Confidential Handling

- Information shall be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

4 Trauma-Informed Approach

- Questioning shall avoid intimidation or re-traumatization;
- Both parties may be accompanied by a support person where permitted.

5.5 Standard of Proof

Findings shall be determined using the **"balance of probabilities"** standard—whether it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred.

This standard reflects international practice in administrative and employment-related investigations.

5.6 Investigation Timeline

CIU will seek to complete investigations within **thirty (30) working days**, recognizing that complex cases may require additional time. Any delay shall be communicated to the parties involved.

5.7 Investigation Outcome

At the conclusion of the investigation, a written report shall be submitted to the designated University authority, summarizing:

The allegations reviewed;

- Evidence considered;
- Findings of fact;
- Determination of whether Policy violations occurred;
- Recommended actions, if applicable.

5.8 Decision and Disciplinary Action

Based on the investigation findings, CIU shall determine appropriate measures in accordance with University regulations, which may include:

- Educational or corrective measures;
- Formal warnings;
- Changes in supervision or duties;
- Suspension or termination of employment;
- Student disciplinary action, including expulsion;
- Contractual action against third parties.

5.9 Notification to Parties

Both the Complainant and Respondent shall be informed, in writing, of:

- The outcome of the investigation;
- Any actions directly affecting them;
- Their right to appeal.
- Information shared will respect privacy and legal limitations.

5.10 Appeals Process

Either party may submit an appeal within ten (10) working days of receiving the outcome on the grounds of:

- Procedural irregularity;
- New evidence not previously available;
- Disproportionate or inappropriate decision.

Appeals shall be reviewed by an independent authority not previously involved in the matter.

5.11 Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

CIU shall maintain secure records of reports and investigations in accordance with data protection requirements. Access shall be restricted to authorized personnel only.

5.12 External Reporting

Nothing in this Policy prevents an individual from pursuing remedies through external legal or regulatory bodies. CIU may also refer matters to law enforcement where required.

5.13 Protection from Retaliation

Any form of retaliation against individuals participating in the reporting or investigation process is strictly prohibited and will be treated as a separate disciplinary violation.