

<b>Document Name &amp; No.</b>	Equal Opportunity Policy for Students of BMU
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## BAQAI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

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# **BAQAI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY**

## **Equal Opportunity Policy for Students of BMU**

**(Version-1)**

**2023**



**Baqai Medical University**

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## **Equal Opportunity Policy for Students of BMU**

Version-1 - 2023

Baqai Medical University is committed to ensuring its learning environment promotes the respectful and fair treatment of all students. It is committed to providing a learning environment free from discrimination and harassment with equal opportunity for and fair treatment of all students. This commitment is based, in part, on the need to ensure that the Institution complies with anti-discrimination laws, but also is an extension of the Institution's organizational values and its commitment to providing a happy, authentic and student-centric learning environment. The Institution will take all reasonable steps to identify and eliminate unequal opportunities, unfair treatment, harassment, bullying and discrimination from its practices to create an inclusive culture that fosters acceptance and respect of all students. This policy on student equal opportunity and fair treatment (free of harassment and discrimination) applies to all activities in which undergraduate & postgraduate students may participate while a student at the Institute or potential student including: admission and enrolments; teaching and learning; student management; course development and delivery; training and instruction; assessment and examination; access to resources and facilities; Institute culture.

### **Equal Opportunity**

Equal opportunity in student education is a principle of non-discrimination which emphasizes that opportunities in education should be freely and equally available to all students irrespective of their personal characteristics or attributes which are unrelated to their ability, performance, knowledge, skill or competence (e.g. race, gender, religion, disability etc.).

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination in student education occurs when a student is denied a benefit or the equal opportunity outlined above, or treated less favorably than another student, on the grounds of a personal characteristic or attributes (e.g. race, gender, religion, disability etc.). Discrimination can be either direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when unlawful distinctions are made between individual students and student groups based on any of the discriminatory grounds. Indirect discrimination occurs when a seemingly harmless policy, rule or practice has a discriminatory effect on an individual student or student group.

The following discriminatory grounds: age; career status; family responsibilities; impairment/disability (past, present or future); industrial activity; political belief or activity; religious belief or activity; marital status; parental status; physical features; pregnancy or potential pregnancy; race, color, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; personal association with a person identified by reference to one of the above attributes.

## **Gender Discrimination**

Gender discrimination is when a person is treated less favorable than that of a person of the opposite gender would be treated in a same or a similar circumstance. The following Gender discriminatory grounds apply under various legislative instruments: Gender orientation; gender identity; intersex status; personal association with a person identified by reference to one of the above attributes.

The Institute does not tolerate any discrimination and undergraduate & postgraduate students who believe they may be subject to unlawful discrimination should initially discuss their concerns with the perpetrator if appropriate and safe to do so, or discuss their concerns as per the BMU Conflict of Interest.

It must be highlighted that not all discrimination is unlawful, and in some instances, discrimination on certain educational grounds may be necessary and fair, such as entry age; language requirements; supplying special services or facilities for a person with an impairment that would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the Institute etc. Unforeseen discrimination exemptions will be decided on a case by case basis by the institutional head.

## **Harassment**

Harassment is perceived or actual unwelcomed conduct that humiliates, offends, or intimidates people. Harassment is bullying conduct that is neither appropriate nor relevant to a situation. This includes words, as well as acts, pictures, and images that create a hostile or threatening atmosphere. Behaviors that can be considered harassment include: verbal abuse; offensive gestures; ignoring or segregating a person or group. The effect of harassment is to make a person feel insulted, offended, intimidated and unable to perform a task effectively or, ultimately safely. Harassment in this policy in any form (including sexual harassment and bullying) refers to student matters only.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is a form of harassment and is when a person or group of people misuse power in a relationship to repeatedly and intentionally harm others. The outcome is the victim feels distressed, less powerful or helpless and there is a risk to their wellbeing. Bullying can be overt (obvious) such as physical, verbal, or cyber harassment, or covert (hidden) such as social exclusion or intimidation. Examples of bullying behavior include: unfair and excessive criticism; excluding someone from a group (including online or in person); ignoring a person's point of view; constantly changing or setting unrealistic targets for a person; undervaluing the efforts of a person; intentionally and repeatedly hurting a person physically; stalking a person; taking advantage of any power over someone else. Bullying is not mutual arguments, disagreements or dislikes.

The Institute does not tolerate any form of harassment and students who believe they are subject to harassment should initially discuss their concerns with the perpetrator if appropriate and safe to do so, or discuss their concerns with institutional heads. Students can also lodge a complaint as per our Conflict of Interest & Conflict of Commitment Policy. Harassment is not legitimate comment or advice (including feedback) from others, such as genuine assessment at their respective institutes of students' work and making a judgment about. They are also expected to provide academic guidance and advice to students to complement their assessment and may have to instruct them about academic policy, processes and timeline provisions. In itself, the act – including repeated acts – of correcting students or pointing out inadequacies of performance does not constitute harassment or bullying in an educational environment. Similarly, invoking unsatisfactory performance procedures or misconduct procedures, or applying student progress procedures, academic integrity procedures or assessment due dates do not in themselves constitute harassment or bullying of students.

## **Institute**

It is the Institute's responsibility to ensure that unlawful discrimination and harassment does not occur. If it does occur, the allegation will be investigated in a sympathetic, fair, confidential and in a timely manner. If a student informs the Institute of allegations of harassment or discrimination that involves persons who are not staff members or students of the Institute, the Institute will consider on the

appropriateness of the Institute's intervening or assisting. The decision to intervene or assist will be made by the Institutional Heads. The Institute will take all reasonable steps ensure itself that it does not engage in discriminatory or harassing behavior towards students including not vilifying or victimizing a student who has voiced a discrimination or harassment complaint. All academic and non-academic staff are responsible for implementation of this policy. The Institutional Heads are responsible for monitoring the compliance of their staff with this policy.

## **Staff**

It is part of the role and obligation of academic and non-academic staff to take reasonable steps to ensure that the educational environment at the Institute is free from discrimination and harassment of students. All staff at the Institute have a responsibility to take appropriate action if concerns about discrimination and harassment are brought to their attention by a student or personally witnessed. Staff must ensure they do not engage in discriminatory or harassing behavior towards students themselves including ensuring that a student is not vilified.

## **Students**

The Institute requires all education students to behave responsibly by complying with this policy and related policies, and to report unacceptable behavior to staff. All students must ensure they do not engage in discriminatory or harassing behavior towards other students or staff members and may be subject to consequential disciplinary action both by the Institute and through legal avenues.

### **Reporting and Acting on allegations of Discrimination**

or Harassment. The Institute will ensure that:

- The above policy and procedure advise students of available support if required when making a complaint or grievance.
- The student is not vilified or victimized for making a complaint or grievance.
- The complaint or grievance process will be dealt with in a professional and sensitive manner and will adhere to the principles of privacy and confidentiality.
- Support is offered to the student if required, and the student is able to have a third party of their choosing present at all meetings.

The student is to ensure that they maintain confidentiality of information when making a complaint. If the student is dissatisfied with the internal process, they may refer the matter to a higher authorities of Institute. If the complaint is substantiated that a student has behaved in a discriminative or harassing manner to another student, the Institute can initiate the consequential actions of such behavior.

Exclude the perpetrating student from the Institute permanently. If the complaint is substantiated that a staff member has behaved in discriminative or harassing manner to a student, the Institute can initiate action such as, but not limited to:

- Performance monitoring (which could include enforced peer review of teaching).
- Formal warning on perpetrator's staff file.
- Dismissal and/or termination of contract of the perpetrating staff member or contractor.

## **Training and Development**

We provide equal opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students to access training, education and professional development programs, ensuring that these opportunities are offered without regard to any discriminatory factors.

## **Equal Access to Education**

Ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have equal access to educational programs, services and facilities. Providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

## **Review and Revision**

This policy will be periodically reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Any necessary revisions will be made promptly to maintain a workplace environment that promotes equal opportunity and non-discrimination in Baqai Medical University.

## **Mechanism**

- Report electronically through web portal
- From there information will go to:
  1. Institutional Head
  2. Students Affairs Department
- Once the Institutional Head and Students Affairs Department is informed they will take necessary action as per regulations.