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Clinical Research Education and Management Services (CREAMS) Gender Equality Policy

Version: March 2025

1. Purpose and Scope

Objective:

CREAMS Gender Equality Policy (CGEP) is a framework designed to ensure that all its employees, regardless of their gender, have equal opportunities, rights, and treatment. This policy aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination, bias, and barriers, fostering a fair and inclusive work environment.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and any other individuals associated with CREAMS through its commitment to promoting gender equality in all areas of employment, including recruitment, compensation, career development, and workplace culture.

2. Policy Statement

- CREAMS affirms and upholds zero-tolerance policy toward gender discrimination, harassment, or bias by promotion of fairness, respect, and equal treatment for all genders in all its business structures and activities.

3. Principles

- **Equal Opportunity:** CREAMS will ensure that all individuals have the same chances for hiring, promotions, and professional growth regardless of gender.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** CREAMS will create an inclusive environment where all genders feel valued and represented.
- **Workplace Respect:** CREAMS will maintain a respectful atmosphere, where gender-related harassment or discrimination is not tolerated.

- Pay Equity: CREAMS will guarantee equal pay for equal work, eliminating gender-based wage gaps.

4. Key Actions

- Recruitment and Hiring: CREAMS will implement gender-neutral language in job descriptions and advertisements. Ensure that recruitment processes are free from gender bias.
- Training and Awareness: CREAMS will provide regular training for all employees, especially managers, on gender equality, unconscious bias, and harassment prevention.
- Supportive Work Environment: CREAMS will establish resources like mentorship programs, employee resource groups, or flexible work arrangements to support diverse needs.
- Promotion and Career Advancement: CREAMS will ensure that promotional opportunities are transparent, fair, and based on merit rather than gender.

5. Reporting and Accountability

- Complaint Mechanisms: CREAMS has a clear and confidential reporting procedure for employees who feel they have experienced gender-based discrimination or harassment, in which whistleblowers are also adequately protected. Written complaints are encouraged to be submitted to Human Resource department headed by Senior Administrative Officer who channels such complaints to Senior Management.
- Investigation and Resolution: CREAMS Senior Management will handle all written complaints forwarded to it for investigation in a shortest possible time not exceeding 2 weeks from day of reporting aiming to resolve the matter within a period of 8 weeks after its reporting to ensure prompt and fair resolution of the complaint in question.
- Accountability: CREAMS will hold managers and staff accountable for upholding the gender equality policy through annual performance appraisals routinely conducted by Line Managers with the staff reporting to them.

6. Review and Improvement

- CREAMS commits to regularly reviewing and updating this policy to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.
- CREAMS will regularly measure progress through gender-related metrics, such as hiring and promotion data, employee surveys, and gender analyses of its Research Association Membership scheme.

7. Legal Compliance

- CREAMS will ensure that it complies with all local, national, and international laws related to gender equality, anti-discrimination, and labour rights, especially in Malawi where the organisation is legally registered.

8. Support and Resources

- CREAMS will offer access to resources like counselling, support networks, and gender-specific initiatives to foster an inclusive work environment, where these are required and recommended by the ethics committee of Senior Management handling the specified case.

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