

2023 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

The American University in Cairo

Gender Policy Integration

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Prevention: Embedding Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Recruitment, Hiring, Admissions, Retention, Promotion, and Advancement
2. Response: Improved Policies

Description of Work:

The American University in Cairo (AUC) is committed to implementing inclusivity, diversity, and equity in its learning and working environment. AUC has been working on embedding these values in its practices, policies, and actions to ensure that gender-justice principles guide all aspects of our campus life, and to eventually promote best practices beyond our community. As a result, AUC has set a goal of reviewing and revising its policies, practices, and procedures and recommending revisions to mainstream gender justice and ensuring a fully inclusive, diverse, safe, and respectful environment. To meet this goal, AUC's US Department of State-funded Tomorrow's Leaders Gender Scholars program supported the formation of the Gender Policy Working Group (GPWG). Composed of faculty, students, and staff and headed by AUC's General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, GPWG's scope was to consider how to best mainstream gender justice in AUC's policies, practices, and procedures, taking into consideration AUC's values, policy guidelines, and Egyptian laws and regulations.

The GPWG identified three policies that required (re)consideration using a gendered lens. The policies were: 1) Paternity Leave for Employees, 2) Maternity Leave for Students, and 3) Early Child Care Benefits.

1. Paternity Leave for Employees

The goal of this policy is to promote gender equity by permitting male employees, as well as female employees, to engage in family care and bond with their newborns. Egyptian law is not equitable in this regard, requiring paid time off only for mothers who give birth. AUC conducted research internally and externally to determine an appropriate and feasible paternity leave policy for male faculty and staff. The policy was published in Spring 2023 and is available on AUC website [here](#). AUC intends to review use of the policy, and impact on performance reviews and promotions for male employees who use the policy (as compared to female employees who take maternity leave), to ensure the policy is serving the purpose of promoting gender justice.

2. Maternity Leave for Students

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The policy is intended to permit student mothers support and the equal opportunity to pursue their studies at AUC. This policy would allow student mothers to take time off to recover from pregnancy and bond with their newborns. The policy draft was prepared in Spring 2023 by the members of the working group and is currently under review.

3. Early Child Care Benefits

AUC's current policy for early childcare is based on the requirement of Egyptian Law, which requires that an employer who employs one hundred or more female workers in the same place has to establish a nursery or entrust to a nursery the task of caring for the children of female workers. The law specifies that all full-time and casual female employees with children from the age of three months to five years old are eligible to receive daycare benefits. Within the context of AUC's commitment to gender equality and the institution's emphasis and support of family care, AUC reviewed the policy and determined that early childcare benefits should be extended to all employees (male and female), so that parents of any gender are able to enroll their child(ren) in the AUC on-campus daycare center or enroll them in an external daycare center of their choice. The policy draft was prepared in Spring 2023 by members of the working group and is currently under review.

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