

Directive for  
Middle East Technical University Northern Cyprus Campus  
Office for Gender Equality Promotion and Sexual Harassment Prevention

**Purpose and Scope**

ARTICLE 1 – (1) This Directive governs the structure, roles and responsibilities of and the guiding principles for the “*METU Northern Cyprus Campus Office for Gender Equality Promotion and Sexual Harassment Prevention*”, which was established in accordance with the “*Middle East Technical University Statement on Gender Equality Principles and Strategies*” approved by the University Senate.

**Basis**

ARTICLE 2 - (1) The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish Penal Code and the relevant provisions of the Turkish Labor Act, the Criminal Code and Evidence Law of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and all international treaties signed by the Republic of Turkey, particularly the Istanbul Convention, focusing on the principle of equality, physical integrity, the right to education and work, constitute the legal basis for this Directive. This Directive is also based on Article 14 of Higher Education Law No. 2547 and the Gender Equality Policy in Higher Education Institutions in Turkey, which was approved by the Council of Higher Education on November 9, 2015. Article 17 of the Disciplinary Regulation for Administrators, Teaching Staff and Civil Servants of Higher Education Institutions and Article 12 of the Student Disciplinary Regulation for Higher Education Institutions also constitute the legal basis for this Directive.

This Directive shall be read to conform to the principles, strategies and definitions that are specified in the “*METU Statement on Gender Equality Principles and Strategies*”.

**Goals of the Office**

ARTICLE 3 – (1) The primary goals of the Office for Gender Equality Promotion and Sexual Harassment Prevention are to build awareness for a university environment that fosters gender equality, to promote a gender balanced representation, to review cases and provide support to victims and sufferers of gender based violence.

**Roles and Responsibilities of the Office**

ARTICLE 4 – (1) To raise awareness of gender equality, to promote a gender balanced representation, to raise awareness of and increase sensitivity towards gender based violence, particularly those incidents involving sexual harassment and assault, and to deal with cases of and provide support to victims and sufferers of gender based violence, the Office will:

- a) Organize gender training and awareness raising activities for units, students and staff members of the University, and for individuals who live/work at the Campus; provide the training and communication materials required,
- b) Collaborate with METU Gender and Women Studies Department and with other units of the University to conduct research and projects and to publish materials on gender equality, discrimination, sexual harassment and assault,
- c) Identify the ratios of male and female representations of academic and administrative staff and students at METU and establish a 'gender equality database'; ensure that all data collected and all analyses carried out in relation to the issue are shared with the relevant units of the University, and that targets for gender equality are set and progress towards these targets is tracked periodically,
- d) Hold regular meetings with the working groups formed within the academic and administrative units,
- e) Carry out needs assessment activities focusing on precautions and safety measures to be taken by the University to ensure that sexual violence is prevented and present the results to the Office of the Campus President,
- f) Encourage the relevant academic and administrative units through information and warnings to take precautions to prevent cases of sexual harassment, assault, threat or retaliation,
- g) Create a 'Harassment Prevention Guide' focusing on precautions that individuals can take to avoid sexual harassment and/or assault,
- h) Receive allegations of sexual harassment and assault, evaluate the cases and present them to the Office of the Campus President,
- i) Provide information on available services and resources on or off university premises to individuals who have submitted an allegation of sexual harassment or assault to the Office,
- j) Identify legal and other support that can be received in line with the demands and needs of the complainants and cooperate with the relevant units and offices of the University in this regard.

(2) If a disciplinary investigation is launched, under the applicable University regulations, into any allegations of sexual harassment or assault that is directed against an individual, an Inquiry Committee appointed by the Board of the Office will examine the allegation and review the investigation process. The results of the Committee's evaluation will be set forth in a written report, which will be presented to the disciplinary officer who launched the investigation. If a disciplinary investigation is not launched into the allegation in question, or if the complainant is not covered by the University disciplinary regulations, the Office shall provide support to the complainant in this regard and inform him/her of available services and resources.

## **Organizational Structure of the Office**

ARTICLE 5 – (1) The Chair, Executive Board, Executive Secretary, and committees of inquiry that are formed according to the needs of this structure shall function within the Office for Gender Equality Promotion and Sexual Harassment Prevention

(2) Permanent Members of Executive Board: The Executive Board consists of the Chair (President of the Campus) and four permanent members appointed by the President. The Vice-President or Advisor to the President in Charge of Student Affairs and the Executive Secretary are the permanent members of the Executive Board of the Office. A minimum of three of the Board members are made up of faculty members who work in the related fields. The term of office for the Board members is three years. A member whose term of office expires can be reappointed for additional terms. At least one of the Board members whose term of office expires is reappointed for another term in order to ensure continuity and transfer of knowledge and expertise in the chain. Any member who does not attend three consecutive meetings within a calendar year without permission and without a valid reason is dropped and replaced with a new member of the same qualifications.

(3) Executive Secretary: One of the permanent members of the Board shall be appointed by the President of the Campus as Executive Secretary for three years. The Executive Secretary can be reappointed when his/her term of office expires. In lieu of the Executive Secretary who leaves before his/her terms of office expires, a new Executive Secretary with the same qualifications shall be appointed for the same duration. The Executive Secretary will:

- a) Provide the coordination and leadership necessary for the Board to fulfill its duties and to function properly,
- b) Prepare the agenda of the Board and invite the Board members to the meeting,
- c) Ensure that all official documents, records and reports of the Board are prepared,
- d) Inform the reporting individual of the process and the Board of the allegations received; convene the Board if necessary,
- e) Prepare an annual report for the allegations submitted to the Office with the support of the Board members and present the report to the President of the Campus,
- f) Record all allegations, submitted verbally or written; ensure that confidentiality is observed and maintained when dealing with topics and incidents which have been reviewed and on which decisions have been made and views and opinions have been issued, and ensure that all the related information and documents are kept confidential,
- g) Represent the Office at the meetings, conferences, panels and similar events held in the country and abroad within the field of activity of the Office.

(4) Temporary Members of the Executive Board: Two students who are recommended by the Board and approved by the President of the Campus also attend the related meetings of the Board, as temporary members, in cases where the perpetrator or the victim is a student. If one of the parties to the dispute is a member of the administrative staff, two administrative staff

members approved by the President of the Campus shall attend the relevant meetings of the Board as temporary members.

(5) Inquiry Committee: A three-person "Inquiry Committee" is established by the Board to investigate the allegations of sexual harassment or assault submitted to the Board.

(6) Every effort should be made to ensure that the permanent and temporary members of the Executive Board and the members of the Inquiry Committee are well-informed of and sensitive to issues related to gender equality. Gender balance is taken into account in the selection of the members.

(7) The Board shall convene upon the invitation of the Executive Secretary with the absolute majority of the members of the Board. The Board takes its decisions by the simple majority of those present.

### **General Principles**

ARTICLE 6 – (1) A student or staff member who has reason to believe that s/he has been subjected to sexual assault or harassment may report the incident, or file a complaint, directly to the Office. Meanwhile, reports of incidents received by any other units of the University should also be forwarded to the Office on the same day by the units concerned. It is necessary for those units to inform the reporting individual of the Office and to refer him/her to the Office.

(2) Except for legal obligations, no proceedings other than the support process can be initiated without the request of the complainant, including cases where the incident is reported by any third parties.

(3) A registration form is created by one of the permanent members of the Executive Board for each person who reports an incident. The form does not include the identity information of the complainant. The Office provides the complainant with a registration number, which will be used for the subsequent procedures. The registration form includes the date and subject matter of the application and the complainant's requests. Other information and documents to be added to the registration form are subject to the approval of the complainant.

(4) Upon receiving an allegation, the Executive Board shall establish an Inquiry Committee for each incident that will be reviewed by the Board. This committee shall conduct the process of investigation and evaluation, prepare an evaluation report concerning the allegation and share that report with the Board.

(5) If the Board considers, upon evaluation of the report prepared by the Inquiry Committee, that the act constitutes a disciplinary offense, it shall submit its opinion based upon this report and its accompanying file, labelled as confidential, to the President of the Campus for decision. In addition, the Board proposes a board member to participate in the disciplinary investigation committee.

(6) The Campus President initiates the disciplinary investigation. The investigators appointed shall consider the evaluation report provided by the Board through negotiations with the Board members during the investigation process, and the points specified in the "*Middle East Technical University Statement on Gender Equality Principles and Strategies*".

(7) The reporting person(s) and the accused person(s) shall be informed by email and/or by phone within the five working days at the latest that the allegation made has been placed on the agenda of the Board.

(8) In the event that any of the parties to the dispute has an academic, administrative or personal relationship with any member of the Board, the member concerned shall not attend the relevant meetings and shall not be included in the evaluation process. Members of the Inquiry Committee are also selected from among those who do not have any relationship with any of the parties.

(9) Support, advice and assistance will be provided by the Office of METU Legal Counselor, Health Center, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Center, and other related organizations when necessary.

### **Validity**

ARTICLE 7 – (1) This Directive shall take effect from the day when it is approved by the METU Senate.

### **Enforcement**

ARTICLE 8 – (1) The provisions of this Directive are executed by the METU Northern Cyprus Campus President.