EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

Introduction

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (AASTMT), as a member of the Arab League, is dedicated to aligning its labor policies and practices with the principles outlined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. In accordance with Egyptian law and international mandates, AASTMT has established a strong legal framework to protect individuals, especially women, from discrimination, harassment, and victimization in both the workplace and society. Our admission policy aims to create a learning, working, and social environment that is entirely free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation, stigmatization, and all forms of harassment and bullying. AASTMT firmly commits to ensuring that no student, staff member, or visitor, particularly women, experiences discrimination based on age, disability, immigration status, gender, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, socio-economic status, or trade union affiliation. Additionally, the institution actively prohibits stereotypes that may lead to assumptions about students, ensuring diverse cultural, religious, and academic perspectives are represented in educational materials. AASTMT promotes a culturally inclusive learning environment that addresses the diverse needs of learners, including women, regarding gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, and age through varied teaching methods, language support, and a steadfast commitment to inclusivity.

Scope

- The policy applies to all staff, students, employees, and applicants to work or study at the University, including women. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to how staff and students should treat each other, ensuring that gender issues and gender bias are addressed. This commitment extends to visitors, contractors, service providers, suppliers, and any other persons associated with the functions of AASTMT. AASTMT aims to create an environment that is free from sexism and supports individuals who may feel marginalized due to gender. It also acknowledges the importance of addressing the gender gap and status of women within the institution. The university is vigilant against aggression and is dedicated to reducing any sexual risk, while ensuring that feminist principles are respected, particularly in relation to fairness and inclusivity.
- This policy is non-contractual and may be updated at any time.

Policy Statement

AASTMT is dedicated to promoting social justice and fostering an environment where every member of our community, including women, is treated with respect and dignity. We are committed to employing a diverse workforce and educating a student body that reflects the global community we serve, including individuals from Europe, Asia, North America, and the Gulf region. Our institution prioritizes equal opportunity and strives to ensure that all staff, students, and visitors are treated fairly, free from discrimination based on age, disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race (including color, nationality, and ethnic origins), and religion. We recognize the importance of addressing health disparities and social inequalities, particularly in relation to students with autism, marginalized groups, and migrant workers.

AASTMT aims to create pathways for social mobility and inclusion, ensuring that all students, including women, can register for courses through an application process that considers the needs of diverse learners regarding gender, immigration status, race, religion, disability, age, and socioeconomic status. We aspire not only to be a source of employment but also to provide opportunities for groundbreaking innovation, forming dynamic teams that address gender issues and are tailored to meet the diverse needs of our staff. Our commitment to financial stability and effective retention practices, alongside robust human resources policies, supports career growth and comprehensive benefits programs.

Recognizing the critical role of our faculty and staff in achieving institutional success across research, training, teaching, and consultancy services, we understand that attracting highly qualified individuals is essential. Our esteemed reputation as a world-class educational institution is built on this commitment, but the sustainability of AASTMT depends on our ability to address economic inequality, health inequities, gender bias, and the effects of financial crises on our community.

Considering current migration flows and the challenges posed by international migration, we stand firm against sexism, racial discrimination, and social stratification, advocating for policies that promote integration and justice for all, including asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. AASTMT is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that champions health equity and addresses the disparities faced by marginalized groups, ensuring that everyone can thrive.

Roles and Responsibilities

The AASTMT Board of Trustees holds ultimate accountability for ensuring compliance with the institution's obligations regarding equality and social justice, particularly concerning gender issues and the status of women. It is essential for both staff and students, including women, to familiarize themselves with and understand this policy. Their responsibilities include challenging and reporting unacceptable behaviour, such as aggression, sexism, and gender bias, through secure mechanisms and the established grievance procedures.

Deans, managers, and advisors play a vital role in modelling positive behaviour by treating all AASTMT members, especially marginalized groups, with dignity and respect while actively addressing any instances of discrimination or harassment. Their duties also involve ensuring that all staff and students are well-informed about this policy and understand the processes for reporting discrimination, harassment, or bullying, including risks related to hypersexuality and sexual risk, without fear of retaliation.

Furthermore, these leaders are responsible for providing staff with information about their rights as outlined in AASTMT policies, including those related to maternity and paternity, as well as broader employee rights. This commitment to inclusion and equity is crucial in fostering an environment where all individuals, regardless of gender, can thrive without facing social inequalities or health disparities.

Aims of the Policy

AASTMT aims to promote equality of opportunity for all, through the following objectives:

- **Equality Assessment:** AASTMT commits to assessing the impact of equality in its policies, procedures, and practices.
- **Data Monitoring and Analysis:** The institution ensures an effective data monitoring and analysis process to track equality-related outcomes.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** AASTMT actively involves staff, students, and stakeholders in the development and delivery of its equality objectives.
- **Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion:** The institution promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion through both internal and external communications.
- **Training for Equality:** AASTMT mandates equality training, particularly for those involved in recruitment and selection processes.
- **Accessible Support Services:** The institution guarantees that staff and student support services are accessible to all, fostering an inclusive environment.

Implementation

- The AASTMT community collectively shares responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy, with specific duties assigned to deans, managers, and advisors who are directly involved in supporting, developing, and supervising staff and students, including women and other marginalized groups.
- AASTMT is committed to ensuring that all staff and students, regardless of gender or marital status, have equal access to a comprehensive range of institutional facilities. We will consider adjustments to working and learning practices wherever reasonably practicable to accommodate our diverse community, promoting social inclusion, addressing gender issues, and ensuring gender equity.
- Any staff member or student, including women, who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization will receive protection under this policy, reinforcing our commitment to health equity, combating sexism, and advancing social justice.
- AASTMT will collaborate with its recognized campus Students' Union and relevant external organizations to address and combat all forms of unlawful discrimination, including racial, gender, and ethnic disparities. This includes promoting feminist values and challenging gender bias.
- This policy will be widely disseminated to all staff and students, ensuring they are informed of their entitlements and responsibilities related to equality, diversity, and inclusion, thereby fostering an environment free from social inequalities and aggression, and advocating for the improved status of women.

Human Resources Practices:

- AASTMT implements clear and transparent policies and procedures for the recruitment and selection of candidates to ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination, especially concerning gender and the status of women, in the hiring process.
- All candidates applying for a position at AASTMT, including women, must agree to the terms and conditions of employment and confirm that they are at least 18 years of age, reinforcing our commitment to fair hiring practices and reducing gender bias.

- The Quality Assurance Centre conducts periodic surveys distributed to all employees to assess their satisfaction with current recruitment systems, wages, incentives, and promotions, while also gathering their perspectives and feedback on the work environment, including any issues related to sexism or gender discrimination.
- Our Human Resources Department manages a formal grievance system to address all human rights-related issues, ensuring that concerns regarding discrimination, harassment, or inequity, particularly those affecting women and other marginalized groups, are handled appropriately.
- We are committed to gender equality, with females comprising over 23% of our total workforce. Among these, 20% hold top management positions, 165 are in middle management roles, and 30% serve as first-line managers, reflecting our dedication to promoting social mobility, challenging the gender gap, and fostering inclusion within our organization.

Special practices for students with disabilities:

- **Accessible Education Center (AEC):**
  - AASTMT established the AEC to promote full inclusion of students with disabilities through collaborations, advising, and systemic campus change.
- **Effective Communication:**
  - Encourages direct communication from students to address barriers.
  - Identifies examples of barriers, including lecture design, web-based information, in-class activities, and exam formats.
- **Student Responsibilities:**
  - Students initiate registration with AEC, providing documentation and discussing educational accommodations.
  - Ongoing communication with AEC for updates and direct communication with instructors regarding accommodations.
- **Staff Responsibilities:**
  - Instructors incorporate inclusive strategies for participation without specialized adaptations.
  - Responsiveness to student needs and requests for accommodations.
- **Notification Process:**
  - AEC responds to requests, facilitating access through services like classroom relocation, exam modifications, and policy adjustments.
  - Ensures fairness and merit-based treatment for all staff and students.
- **Universal Design:**
  - Promotes Universal Design (UD) principles to embed inclusive practices into courses.
  - Establishes clear expectations and diverse instructional strategies for student success.
- **Technology Access Program (TAP):**
  - TAP supports students facing technology barriers, assisting with assistive technologies and inclusive design.
  - Offers consultations, workshops, and resources for accessible digital content creation.

Sanctions

Non-compliance with the principles outlined in this policy may be deemed a disciplinary offense and will be addressed through the appropriate procedures

Complaints

AASTMT is dedicated to addressing any incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization with the highest level of seriousness. If a staff or student member is found guilty of unlawful discrimination, sexism, or harassment, appropriate disciplinary measures will be implemented. This commitment also applies to members of the public, visitors, or service providers who engage in discriminatory behavior or exhibit aggression, especially against women or other marginalized groups. Individuals who file discrimination complaints, including staff, students, or others, have the right to do so without fear of retaliation, and the institution guarantees that all complaints, including those concerning gender bias or gender issues, will be handled promptly and fairly. Members of the public are encouraged to initially direct their complaints to the appropriate University service, and AASTMT permits the submission of informal complaints either anonymously or with assistance from an advisor, ensuring a safe space for addressing concerns, particularly related to the status of women.

Internal Monitoring and Auditing

Monitoring will take place through the Annual Performance Review (APR) process. The diversity of job applicants, shortlisted candidates, new appointments, academic promotions, student admissions, and attainment, will be monitored as part of the annual reporting.

Further Information

Further information and support are available from the following:

- HR department.
- Academic Adviser or a support adviser at the university
- Student's Union representative

Paternity, partner and adoption support policy:

Purpose: This policy sets out Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) provisions for paternity and partner leave, adoption- and surrogacy-related leave, flexible working, and associated benefits. It aligns with AASTMT's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments and applies to all staff regardless of contract type, working pattern, or gender identity, including adoptive and intended parents.

Scope: The policy covers leave and support for: (a) a staff member who is a father, non-birth mother, or partner (including same-sex partner) of the birth parent; (b) an adoptive parent or partner; and (c) an intended parent via surrogacy. It also provides time off to attend qualifying appointments and sets job protection, pay, and notice rules. Nothing in this policy reduces rights granted under applicable Egyptian law or AASTMT contracts; where law or contract is more generous, the more generous provision prevails.

1. Eligibility

Employed by AASTMT at the expected week of childbirth (EWC), child placement, or parental order application.

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Be the child's father, the birth parent's spouse/partner, an adoptive parent or partner, or an intended parent in a surrogacy arrangement.

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Provide the required notice and evidence (see section 6).

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2. Leave and pay entitlements

AASTMT provides the following minimum entitlements. Colleges/units may offer more generous terms with HR approval.

Paid paternity/partner leave: up to 10 working days on full pay, to be taken in one or two blocks within 8 weeks of birth or placement.

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Additional parental leave: up to 10 further working days unpaid (or taken as annual leave subject to manager approval) within 6 months of birth or placement.

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Multiple births/adoptions: the same entitlements apply per event.

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Premature birth/NICU: paid leave window may be deferred to commence from the child's hospital discharge, upon HR approval.

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Bereavement, miscarriage or stillbirth (from 24 weeks' gestation): up to 10 working days paid compassionate leave in addition to any statutory entitlements.

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3. Time off for antenatal/adoption appointments

Eligible staff may take paid time off to attend up to two antenatal or pre-adoption appointments (up to 6 hours per appointment, including reasonable travel). Evidence of appointment time may be requested by HR.

4. Flexible working and workplace adjustments

Temporary flexible arrangements (e.g., adjusted hours, remote/hybrid working, compressed weeks) may be agreed for up to 12 weeks post-return; extensions require HR review.

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Reasonable adjustments include schedule changes around childcare pick-up, medical appointments, and bonding needs, balanced with operational requirements.

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Annual leave may be combined with paternity/partner leave subject to normal approval routes.

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5. Job protection, benefits and non-discrimination

Continuous service, pay progression, and benefits (including pension and allowances) continue during paid leave.

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Return to the same role or, where not reasonably practicable, a suitable alternative on no less favourable terms.

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6. Notice and evidence requirements

Staff should notify their line manager and HR in writing at least 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth (or as soon as reasonably practicable for adoption/surrogacy), stating: (a) the expected date of birth/placement; (b) intended leave start date and duration; and (c) confirmation of eligibility. HR may request evidence such as a medical note/appointment card, adoption matching certificate, or surrogacy documentation.

7. Coordination with statutory/contractual pay

AASTMT paid leave will be coordinated with any statutory or contractual entitlements. Where statutory entitlements arise, AASTMT pay will be inclusive so that total pay does not exceed normal full pay unless otherwise agreed.

8. Related policies and support

Maternity and pregnancy loss support; adoption and surrogacy; parental bereavement; flexible working; dignity and respect at work; grievance.

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Childcare: staff may use approved local nursery arrangements and, for Smart Village campus, facilities available within the business park (see campus pages and Smart Village Club services).

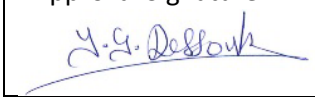
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Wellbeing and counselling: Psychological Support Services and the Employee Assistance channels.

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9. Governance, review and queries

Human Resources is the owner of this policy. Colleges/units are responsible for local communication and implementation. The policy will be reviewed annually and after material legislative change. Queries should be directed to HR.

Document control	
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Lead contact:	● Vice President for Education and Student Affairs ● Head of Human Resources Affairs
Approval Signature 	Dean of Scientific Research and Innovation

And our Psychological Support Services on the AASTMT webpage