



URDANETA CITY UNIVERSITY REINFORCES COMMITMENT TO SDG 5 THROUGH STRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI- RETALIATION POLICY

In firm support of **Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality**, Urdaneta City University (UCU) strengthens its dedication to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment by strictly enforcing its **Policy on Protection Against Retaliation** for

Reporting Discrimination.

This policy reflects UCU's **unwavering stand against all forms of discrimination and retaliation**, ensuring that every student, faculty member, and staff enjoys equal rights and opportunities within the university community.

Promoting Equality and Protection for All

UCU recognizes that **a truly inclusive academic environment** can only exist when individuals are **free to speak out against discrimination** without fear of reprisal. In alignment with SDG 5, which calls for the **elimination of discrimination and violence against women and vulnerable groups**, the university guarantees protection to anyone who reports cases of gender-based or other discriminatory acts.

Under this policy, **retaliation in any form is strictly prohibited**—including actions that may cause academic disadvantage, biased grading, job demotion, exclusion from projects or activities, or any other adverse treatment following a discrimination report.

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Core Principles Upholding Gender Equality and Fairness

The policy is anchored on the following guiding principles that reinforce UCU's commitment to gender equality and fairness:

- **Protection Against Retaliation:**

UCU ensures that all individuals who report discrimination or participate in investigations are **safeguarded from any educational or employment disadvantage**

- **Confidentiality:**

Reports and investigations are handled with **utmost confidentiality**, maintaining the dignity and privacy of all parties involved.

- **Fair and Impartial Investigation:**

Trained personnel conduct investigations to ensure **objective, transparent, and just outcomes**, reinforcing trust in the system.

- **Academic and Professional Safeguards:**

The university guarantees that **no one's academic standing, employment status, or opportunities** will be affected for reporting discrimination.

- **Education and Awareness:**

Regular **training sessions and awareness programs** are conducted to help the community understand their rights and the procedures for reporting discrimination safely.

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Commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 5

Through this policy, UCU not only protects individuals but also advances **gender equality and empowerment for all**, directly supporting **SDG 5**. The university continues to ensure that **no student, faculty, or staff member is silenced or disadvantaged** for standing up against discrimination.

Strong Accountability and Continuous Review

Any confirmed act of retaliation is met with **strict disciplinary action**, which may include suspension, termination, or academic sanctions. The policy undergoes regular reviews to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with **national laws, global standards, and the University's core values** of integrity, respect, and equality.

A Safe and Empowering Learning Environment

By firmly upholding this policy, **Urdaneta City University affirms its role as a gender-responsive institution**—one that cultivates respect, equity, and justice for all members of its academic community.

Through this decisive action, UCU demonstrates that its **commitment to SDG 5 goes beyond advocacy—it is embedded in policy, practice, and culture.**

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POLICY ON PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION FOR REPORTING DISCRIMINATION

(Revised 2024)

I. Purpose

Urdaneta City University (UCU) reaffirms its commitment to providing a **safe, inclusive, and equitable learning and working environment** that upholds **human rights, gender equality, and respect for diversity** in alignment with **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 – Gender Equality**.

To sustain this commitment, UCU enacts and enforces this policy to **protect any member of the university community** who, in good faith, reports discrimination or participates in related investigations. This policy ensures that such individuals will not suffer **academic, professional, or social disadvantages** as a result of reporting.

II. Scope

This policy applies to **all members of the UCU community**—students, faculty, administrative and support staff, contractors, and campus visitors—whether on-campus, online, or in university-sanctioned activities and partnerships.

III. Policy Statement

UCU **strictly prohibits retaliation** against anyone who reports, assists, or participates in any process concerning a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

The University encourages **open and responsible reporting** of misconduct and guarantees that individuals acting in good faith are protected from:

- Loss of academic opportunities,
- Employment disadvantages,
- Harassment, exclusion, or intimidation, and
- Any form of adverse treatment related to their report or participation.

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IV. Definitions

1. Discrimination:

- Any unfair, unequal, or prejudiced treatment based on **sex, gender, race, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other protected status.**

3. Retaliation:

- Any **adverse action** taken against an individual for reporting discrimination, participating in an investigation, or opposing discriminatory practices. This includes, but is not limited to, **academic bias, demotion, reassignment, exclusion, termination, harassment, or social marginalization.**

V. Guiding Principles and Implementation Measures

1. Protection Against Retaliation

- No member of UCU shall be subject to reprisal for reporting discrimination in good faith.
- Retaliation monitoring mechanisms** shall be established through the **Office of Gender and Development (GAD)** and **Human Resource Management Office (HRMO)** to regularly assess compliance.
- Anonymous reporting systems will be developed to ensure access for those fearing exposure.

2. Confidentiality

- All discrimination and retaliation reports will be treated with **strict confidentiality.**
- Access to reports and investigation results will be limited to **authorized officials** directly involved in the case.

The University will use **secure digital and physical filing systems** to safeguard sensitive records.

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3. Fair Investigation Process

- Complaints shall be handled by a **trained committee** composed of representatives from the **Office of Academic Affairs, HRMO, and the GAD Office**, ensuring impartiality and gender sensitivity.
- Investigations must be **initiated within 10 working days** of receiving a report and concluded **within 30 working days**, barring exceptional circumstances.
- Complainants and respondents shall receive **written updates** on the progress and outcome of the investigation.

4. Academic and Professional Safeguards

- Individuals who report discrimination will retain their **academic standing, employment status, and benefits** throughout and after the process.
- Supervisors, instructors, and administrators are prohibited from taking any action that may **affect grades, assignments, promotions, or evaluations** of a reporting party.
- **Protective measures** (temporary reassignment, counseling, or academic accommodations) will be made available as needed.

5. Education and Awareness

- UCU shall conduct **mandatory annual training** for students, faculty, and staff on discrimination, retaliation, and gender sensitivity.
- The **Gender and Development Office**, in partnership with the **Office of External Affairs and Linkages**, will conduct **workshops, posters, and orientation sessions** to promote awareness of this policy.
- Orientation programs for new employees and students will include an **overview of their rights and reporting procedures**.

6. Accountability and Monitoring

- The **Office of the President** will oversee the policy's implementation and require **annual compliance reports** from HRMO and GAD.
- Metrics shall include the **number of reports filed, resolved, and preventive measures undertaken** to promote transparency and continuous improvement.

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VI. Reporting and Resolution

- Students may report cases to the **Office of Academic Affairs or GAD Office**, while employees may report to the **HRMO**.
- A **confidential online reporting portal and hotline** shall be maintained to facilitate safe reporting.
- Immediate **support services**, such as counseling and academic accommodations, will be provided to affected individuals.
- All reports will be handled **promptly, objectively, and with due respect for all parties involved**.

VII. Consequences for Violations

Individuals found guilty of retaliation will face **disciplinary action** in accordance with UCU's Code of Conduct, which may include:

- Written reprimand,
- Suspension,
- Dismissal or expulsion, or
- Revocation of contractual or academic privileges.

Department heads or supervisors who **fail to act upon verified reports** may also be held administratively accountable.

VIII. Review and Updates

This policy shall be reviewed **every two years** or earlier as required by legal standards, CHED directives, or institutional evaluation results. The **GAD Office** and **Legal Office** will jointly recommend updates to ensure continued alignment with **national gender and equality laws**.

IX. Conclusion

Through this strengthened policy, **Urdaneta City University** reaffirms its dedication to **upholding gender equality, justice, and inclusivity** across all levels of the institution.

By protecting those who speak out against discrimination, UCU builds a **safe, respectful, and empowering environment** where every individual can thrive without fear of retaliation—a **true embodiment of the University's commitment to SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all**.

Effective Date: May 16, 2022

Revised and Reviewed: October 2024

Next Review: October 2026

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