

UGANDA MARTYRS UNIVERSITY



Institutional Safeguarding Policy

February 2025

Table of Contents

Definitions of key terms	3
Abbreviations/Acronyms.....	4
1.0 Introduction	5
2.0 Purpose of the policy	5
3.0 Rationale of the policy	6
4.0 Objectives of the policy	6
5.0 Scope of the policy	7
6.0 Policy Statement.....	7
7.0 Principles for compliance.....	7
7.1 Identifying Abuse or Harm.....	7
7.2 Risk Assessment	8
7.3 Recruitment, Selection and Employment procedures	8
7.4 Sexual Activity	9
7.5 Reporting concerns from Community Engagement	9
7.6 Reporting Suspensions, Allegations or Actual Incidents	10
7.7 Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Involving Staff and Students.	10
7.8 Safeguarding and Protection from Radicalization	11
7.9 Responsibilities of Parents, Guardians and Carers	11
7.10 Record keeping	12
7.11 Confidentiality in Safeguarding Matters	12
8.0 Legal framework and other complimentary policies	13
9.0 Accounting Officer	13
10.0 Responsible University Officer/Chair	13
11.0 Review date.....	13

Definitions of key terms

Abuse: Anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms both adults and children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development. This may involve any of the following categories, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect/negligent treatment and sexual abuse/exploitation.

Adults: Individuals over the age of 18.

Children or Child: Individuals who are aged under 18 years old

Discrimination: Treating individuals unfairly or unjustly based on certain characteristics or attributes, such as their race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion. Can take the form of: Differential Treatment, Hate Speech or Slurs, Exclusion or Segregation.

Harm: Psychological, emotional, physical and any other infringement of an individual's human rights.

Harassment: Refers to unwanted and/or illegal conduct, activity or behaviour that others find offensive and/or demeaning to their dignity and respect.

Neglect: Deliberate failure to meet an individual's or group's basic and essential needs that they are entitled to. This may involve failure to protect stakeholders from danger, not listening to their grievances, failing to provide a safe environment for individuals in your care, absconding lectures, failure to take reasonable measures to protect stakeholders from potential hazards and abuse.

Partners and Contractors: Any person with a contract or agreement with the University to provide goods, services or collaboration.

Radicalization: Process by which individuals or groups adopt extreme views or engage in violent actions, often driven by ideological, political, or religious beliefs.

Risk: The possibility of a loss or other adverse events that have the potential to interfere with the University's ability to fulfill its mandate.

Risk Management: Defined as the logical step-by-step process taken to protect and consequently minimize risks to the University's stakeholders

Safeguarding: It refers to measures to protect the health, welfare and human rights of individuals, which allow people especially children, and vulnerable adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. It includes abuse, harm or neglect that is inflicted

on others or abuse, and harm or neglect that an individual might inflict upon themselves.

Staff: all employees who have entered into a contract of service and appointed for teaching, research, administration and support duties. (Human Resource Manual October 2022)

Stakeholders: Refer to all those that contribute to UMU's activities not limited to (Students, Staff, Management Committee, Council Members, contractors and partners)

Student: Any person registered to study with the University, whether in Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) or its affiliated institutions;

Sexual exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a person in position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This includes exchange of assistance due to the exploited benefiting from the University activities.

Victim/Abused: Refers to anyone (child or adult) who has fallen victim of abuse.

Vulnerable adult: A person who is 18 years and above who operates in an environment where there are staff or colleagues that can influence their success and/or those whose characteristics include most of the following: has a learning or physical or mental disability/illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or has a reduction in physical or mental capacity; or is in receipt of any form of healthcare; or is receiving community services because of age, health or disability; or is unable, for any other reason, to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation or is in a situation of unequal power relations.

Abbreviations/Acronyms

CFO	:	Chief Finance Officer
DHR	:	Director Human Resource
DOS	:	Dean of Students
DVC	:	Deputy Vice Chancellor
HR	:	Human Resources
UMU	:	Uganda Martyrs University

1.0 Introduction

Uganda Martyrs University is deeply committed to upholding the dignity, rights, and well-being of all its stakeholders. This safeguarding policy is a framework to ensure that every stakeholder feels protected and supported while engaging in university-related activities.

Most university staff and students encounter some kind of abuse, harm, risk and neglect in forms of; financial abuse, academic abuse, discrimination, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, institutional abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note that these abuses can occur within the university when someone in a position of authority is able to affect the outcome of individuals and in the community both when one member harms another and as self-imposed behaviors or actions.

Guided by Catholic values and a dedication to holistic education, Uganda Martyrs University strives to foster an environment that prevents abuse, and harm, promotes respect, and addresses safeguarding concerns effectively and transparently. All university community members shall share a collective responsibility to adhere to this policy, ensuring a nurturing and inclusive space where everyone can thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

2.0 Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Actively promote and safeguard the welfare of UMU stakeholders.
- b) Have clear procedures in place to identify and appropriately support students and staff who might be at risk of radicalization or exploitation.
- c) Raise Staff and Student awareness about the University's safeguarding expectations.
- d) Ensure Staff are competent to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities and feel supported in this role.
- e) Ensure consistent good safeguarding practice throughout the University.
- f) Create a culture of safety, equality and protection.
- g) Provide a framework for preventing, cautioning & addressing safeguarding violations.

3.0 Rationale of the policy

Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), as a diverse institution, offers its stakeholders a variety of interactions, experiences, and opportunities. However, this also poses risks; including abuse, neglect, discrimination, harassment, and other forms of harm. The risks at any university are high because students and staff are unlikely to have the experience to reduce these risks themselves. There need to be specific guidelines and reporting frameworks in place. UMU is steadfast in its commitment to fostering a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for all its stakeholders.

This policy is designed to establish clear standards and practices to prevent harm, protect individuals, and effectively address safeguarding concerns. It emphasizes the collective responsibility of the university and its stakeholders to uphold respect, rights, and the overall well-being of everyone within the UMU community.

Additionally, the policy aligns with national laws such as the Uganda Constitution, which explains the protection and promotion of fundamental and other human rights and freedoms of the vulnerable and marginalized groups and persons with disabilities, institutional values, and international best practices in safeguarding and protection.

By implementing this policy, UMU strives to:

- i. Promote a culture of safety, inclusion, and mutual respect.
- ii. Reduce risks related to abuse, neglect, and harm.
- iii. Provide clear guidelines and accountability measures for handling safeguarding issues.
- iv. Enhance the academic, social, and emotional well-being of all stakeholders.

This policy reaffirms UMU's dedication to a holistic approach to education, prioritizing the welfare and well-being of its stakeholders.

4.0 Objectives of the policy

The policy aims to uphold UMU's commitment to a safe, respectful, and empowering environment for all. It seeks to;

1. Promote the safety and well-being of its stakeholders.
2. Prevent harm and abuse by identifying, addressing, and mitigating risks associated with abuse, neglect, discrimination, and harassment.
3. Provide clear guidelines through establishing comprehensive procedures for reporting, responding to, and resolving safeguarding concerns effectively and with confidentiality.

4. Foster an inclusive environment associated with respect, and mutual support that values the diversity and dignity of every individual.
5. Build awareness and capacity through regular training and awareness programs to equip the university stakeholders with knowledge and skills to recognize and address safeguarding concerns.

5.0 Scope of the policy

The policy applies to all University teaching, learning, research, community outreach programs, and all activities involving UMU stakeholders, both on and off campus.

This policy addresses the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, protection from abuse, harm, risk, neglect as stipulated in the relevant policies and procedures associated with them.

6.0 Policy Statement

UMU is committed to conducting its activities and operations in a manner that is safe to all the stakeholders it serves. All UMU staff, students or any person directly or indirectly engaged in any activity implemented by the University whether deliberate or undeliberate are explicitly prohibited from engaging in any activity that may result in any kind of abuse.

UMU shall ensure that all stakeholders directly or indirectly engaged in any activity implemented by the University conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this policy's commitments. This includes treating as a serious issue any violation of this policy.

UMU shall also ensure that all stakeholders or any person directly or indirectly engaged in any activity implemented by the university are aware of this policy through various avenues. This awareness shall be done within the first two weeks of recruitment or engagement with UMU and refresher trainings shall be conducted from time to time.

7.0 Principles for compliance

7.1 Identifying Abuse or Harm

Abuse or harm may take many different forms and individuals may have different perceptions of what constitutes harm or abuse. Abuse and harm can be inflicted

upon others but an individual can also inflict harm and abuse upon themselves. The University regards harm and abuse to include:

- a) Physical abuse such as intentionally slapping, pushing, biting, spitting, punching, pulling hair, and scalding
- b) Domestic violence for example isolation, physical assault, and threats
- c) Sexual abuse such as rape, defilement, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, and online sexploitation
- d) Psychological or Emotional abuse such as coercion, threats of harm, humiliation, blaming, cyber bullying, and spreading rumors
- e) Financial or material abuse for example online fraud, scamming, and theft
- f) Discriminatory abuse such as based on race, gender, religion, age, disability, and socio-economic background
- g) Organisational or institutional abuse such as poor professional practice, data breaches, exploitation, and negligence

The university shall take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of its members. It has a duty of care to act where there is cause for concern; to protect the welfare of all those within its community; and, where required or deemed relevant, to notify appropriate statutory and regulatory agencies about any concerns. The university has a duty to investigate before acting and with emergency cases, immediate action shall be taken.

7.2 Risk Assessment

7.2.1 Staff members responsible for activities at the University or run under the auspices of the University that involve children and/or vulnerable adults shall ensure that a risk assessment is taken for the activities involved and appropriate steps taken to protect the welfare of those involved.

7.2.2 All those involved in the risk assessment process shall understand that the risk assessment is not only a way to mitigate or remove any potential risks but also a prompt to consider alternative working practices.

For more information on how to manage the different risks, refer to the UMU Risk Management Policy of 2022.

7.3 Recruitment, Selection and Employment procedures

7.3.1 The University's guidelines on recruitment, selection and employment procedures can be found in UMU Human Resource Manual 2022.

7.3.2 The University shall conduct a background check on all prospective recruits to ascertain whether they are free from any history of abuse of children or vulnerable adults.

7.3.3 Those found with a history of abuse of children or vulnerable adults shall not be recruited.

7.4 Sexual Activity

UMU shall be committed to ensure that:

7.4.1 All people below 18 years are regarded as underage and cannot legally give informed consent to sexual activity. This policy recognizes also that sexual activity with or without their consent shall be treated as a serious breach of National laws, UMU Staff Code of Conduct 2022 and HIV & AIDS 2010 and Anti-Sexual Harassment 2017 Policies; and shall result into disciplinary action being taken including referring the cases to relevant authorities.

7.4.2 Sexual activity with people above 18 years whether vulnerable or not with their consent but in circumstances that shows or reflects sexual exploitation due to unequal power relations shall be treated as a serious issue and shall result in disciplinary action being taken against the offender as cited in the Human Resource Manual 2022.

7.5 Reporting concerns from Community Engagement

7.5.1 Staff and students who are undertaking activities at the premises of another organization shall familiarize themselves with the host organization's safeguarding policies and procedures and the name and contact details of the organization's safeguarding officer. In case the host institution has no safeguarding policy, the UMU policy shall prevail.

7.5.2 Staff with concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult with whom they come into contact in a placement setting or in the course of external visits shall follow the procedure in place at the host institution. If, for whatever reasons, the member of staff feels that this is inappropriate, they shall refer their concerns to the Dean of Students/ Director Human Resources who shall contact the appropriate agency. In cases between staff and students, these shall be reported to the university disciplinary committee.

7.5.3 Students with safeguarding concerns about an individual with whom they come into contact in a placement, through a mentoring scheme, a project setting or in the course of external visits shall follow the procedure in place at host institution. If, for whatever reason(s), the student feels that this is inappropriate or he/she lacks the confidence to raise their concerns then one shall refer the concern to the University staff who is supervising their placement, mentorship scheme or project.

7.6 Reporting Suspicions, Allegations or Actual Incidents

7.6.1 The welfare of any individual impacted by a safeguarding concern is paramount. When the impacted individual is a member of the University community, then the priority is to ensure that they are able to make a supported disclosure and are then connected to appropriate further support.

7.6.2 Where a concern arises involving children or vulnerable adults, members of staff have a duty to report safeguarding suspicions, allegations or actual incidents if they believe that this is necessary to prevent serious harm to others, regardless of whether the information has been disclosed in confidence to them or if they remain unsure of their suspicions. Staff who fail to discharge this responsibility may be liable to disciplinary action as cited in the Human Resource Manual 2022.

7.6.3 Staff shall not attempt to investigate or resolve a safeguarding suspicion, allegation, or actual incident by themselves; but shall report it through the right available channels as specified by this policy.

7.7 Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Involving Staff and Students.

7.7.1 In the event of any safeguarding suspicion, allegation or apparent abuse affecting a child, or vulnerable adult or complaint regarding abuse committed by a member of the University Management, staff, or student, the matter shall be reported, in writing to the Staff Committee of Council if a member of management is the offender, the immediate supervisor, or the Justice Representation Committee respectively. In circumstances where the information is disclosed in confidence, the person receiving the information must disclose this information to the Staff Committee of Council, the Director Human Resources or Dean of Students respectively if they believe that this is necessary to prevent serious harm to others.

7.7.2 If the urgency or circumstances does not make it possible to contact Staff Committee of Council, Immediate Supervisor or the Justice Representation

Committee, it shall be reported to other offices who shall act accordingly as reflected in the safeguarding organogram in Figure 1.

7.7.3 On being notified in writing of any suspicion, allegation or apparent abuse involving a member of University management, staff or student, appropriate offices shall:

- a) Take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the individual(s) in question and any other individual who might be at risk;
- b) Liaise with the person who reported the original concern and ensure that a report of the incident(s) or allegation(s) is completed;
- c) Consult with other members of Council, staff, students' leaders respectively if deemed appropriate or advice is required;
- d) With the exception of a Management member, the matter shall be reported to representatives identified in the safeguarding organogram.
- e) The safeguarding officers for students shall be the Dean of students and for staff, the Director Human Resources.

7.7.4 Any written notification of suspicion, allegation or evidence of abuse or harm shall result into a decision to suspend the member of University management/staff concerned whilst investigations proceed. For students, suspension shall be a penalty upon proving their guilt after investigation.

7.7.5 In the event of any abuse, the victim shall report the case within three months.

7.8 Safeguarding and Protection from Radicalization

The University has a duty to safeguard and prevent its stakeholders from being abused or put their lives at risk as a result of radicalization. All members of the University community have the right to speak freely and to express their opinions in line with the values of inclusion, tolerance and freedom of speech as well as whistleblowing on such occurrences as guided by the institutional whistle blowing policy 2024. Any concerns shall be reported to, the Director Human Resources (DHR) or the Dean of students (DOS) and other relevant security organs.

7.9 Responsibilities of Parents, Guardians and Carers

Unless they are students of the University or are attending the University as part of an authorized visit or activity, children and vulnerable adults are not allowed to access learning environments, laboratories, workshops or other premises which present hazards or contain valuable or fragile equipment. The University cannot

guarantee the safety and/or welfare of children or vulnerable adults who are on its premises without its knowledge and consent. Parents, guardians or carers who bring children or vulnerable adults onto the University premises shall take responsibility for their safety and welfare and ensure that they do not place themselves at risk, disturb others or damage property. In case they harm others or damage property, those parents, guardians and carers shall be held responsible.

7.10 Record keeping

7.10.1 It is the responsibility of the DOS and DHR with the DVC as the Lead to maintain records of all concerns raised and actions taken.

7.10.2 All records created in accordance with this policy shall be managed in accordance with the University's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records;

7.10.3 Information about any allegations or suspicions of abuse shall be shared on a need-to-know basis only;

7.10.4 Documentation related to allegations or suspicions shall be stored in a secure place, only accessible to those with appropriate knowledge of the suspicions or allegations;

7.10.5 Details of completed risk assessments relating to activities involving children or vulnerable Adults shall be retained by the relevant department whilst an activity or event is ongoing and for a minimum of five years after it has ceased (or the risk assessment has been superseded);

7.10.6 The University shall undertake a regular review of this policy, safeguarding procedures, including an update and review of the effectiveness of procedures and their implementation as well as inter-agency working.

7.11 Confidentiality in Safeguarding Matters

UMU is committed to ensure that all sensitive information is managed in a manner that is respectful and professional.

As far as possible, the confidentiality of all individuals involved in any allegation, investigation or resulting disciplinary proceedings shall be respected by the University. However, there may be circumstances where it is necessary for the University to share information with parties such as the police, and the parents/guardian, or designated emergency contact of the person concerned. Information may also need to be disclosed if there is a public interest imperative. The University cannot therefore guarantee that the confidentiality of any disclosures can be

maintained in all circumstances. However, the University shall ensure that the safeguarding register is properly managed.

8.0 Legal framework and other complimentary policies

This policy shall work in collaboration with;

- a) Staff Code of Conduct 2017
- b) Human Resource Manual 2022
- c) HIV and Aids & Ant- Sexual Harassment Policy 2010

9.0 Accounting Officer

Dean of Students for students, Director Human Resources for staff and the overall accounting officer for this policy shall be the Deputy Vice Chancellor.

10.0 Responsible University Officer/Chair

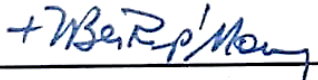
The DVC has leadership responsibility for the University's safeguarding arrangements. He/she together with the DOS for student safeguarding and DHR for staff safeguarding shall be responsible for:

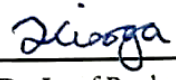
- i. Developing the safeguarding procedures
- ii. Implementing and promoting this policy;
- iii. Ensuring that the policy is monitored and reviewed in accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and adults;
- iv. Acting as the main contact within the University for safeguarding concerns;
- v. Ensuring that appropriate University Staff and students are provided with information, advice and training on the protection of children and adults in a vulnerable situation;
- vi. Establishing and maintaining contacts with the external agencies including the Police and other authorities;
- vii. Referring concerns to the University Management where need be;
- viii. Maintaining confidential records of relevant cases and actions taken;
- ix. Taking advice from the University Lawyer on the legal aspects of the above responsibilities.

11.0 Review date

This policy was approved by the **101st University Council meeting** that sat on **8th February 2025**.

The University shall keep this policy under review to ensure that it continues to comply with developments in legislation, regulations and good practice. This shall be done every five years.


 Most Rev. Raphael p'Mony Wokorach, MCCJ
 Chairperson, UMU Council


 Rev. Dr. Josef Buchana Kisoga
 Secretary, UMU Council

ORGANOGRAM FOR REPORTING CHANNELS FOR ABUSE, HARM, RISK, AND NEGLECT

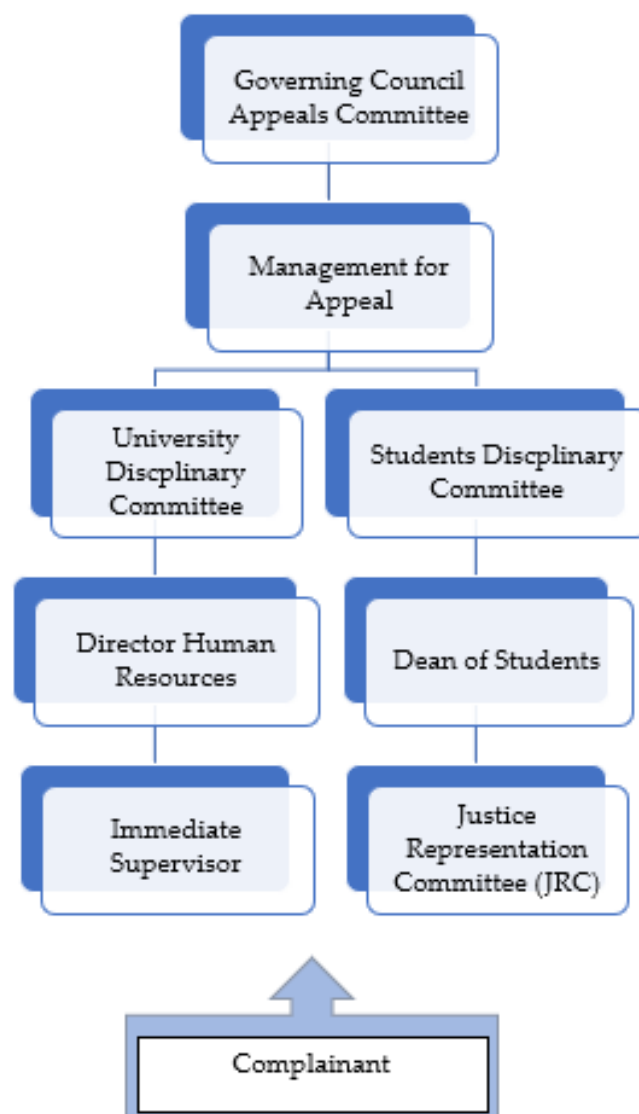


Figure 1: Reporting channels for abuse, harm, risk and neglect