



The Mico University College
DO IT WITH THY MIGHT

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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The Mico University College

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF CHANGE	REVIEWER(S)
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Aug 2019	Policy reviewed and updated by OQA team.	OQA Team
Sept 2019	Critical corrections to text; policy template applied.	J. McFarquhar/ R. Wright
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For more information about policy development, consult the Policy Formulation and Management Policy on The Mico website at themico.edu.jm/policies.



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1. BACKGROUND

The Mico is committed to a non-discriminatory approach in all its dealings with both internal and external stakeholders. The Mico also respects and values diverse life experiences that are consistent with national laws, and commits to ensuring that all voices are valued and contribute towards the institution's decision-making processes. At The Mico University College, a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace is one wherein all employees and stakeholders, whatever their profile, feel valued and respected.

Diversity is the existence of differences in the personal and professional profile of individuals are present and obvious. A diverse workforce encourages excellence by bringing together unique and varied perspectives that facilitate meaningful exchange, increased creativity, broadening of shared perspectives, knowledge and decision-making capacities.

Equity is an approach based in fairness through which all stakeholders are afforded equal opportunities. This at times means that resources may be allocated unequally to ensure that each stakeholder or stakeholder group, by virtue of its own needs, have a fair chance to succeed.

Inclusion is the degree to which diverse populations can fully participate in the decision-making processes and other activities within an organization or group. Their presence at such occasions or their invitation to observe is not sufficient, as inclusion means that they are also allowed to make meaningful contributions.

Through this and related policies, The Mico shall encourage and facilitate the inclusion and participation of all members of the community in various academic, professional and authorized social activities. Recognizing however that diversity and inclusion are not sufficient for promoting a healthy environment, The Mico shall also ensure that members of the community are allowed free participation in said activities.

2. PURPOSE

It is the view of this institution that no member of the community should be made to feel marginalized or disrespected because of any differences they may exhibit with regard to their personal, physical or ideological qualities. To this end, the intent of this policy is to support institutional efforts to promote workplace and student diversity and to ensure that all staff, students and stakeholders are afforded equitable treatment as they interact with the institution's various systems and pursue campus offerings.

This policy will contribute towards the development of a welcoming environment that respects and values all individual actors regardless of their differences. It shall also guide the behaviour of all internal stakeholders when dealing or interacting with guests and other stakeholders in any circumstance, in keeping with mutual rights and responsibilities under the Jamaican Constitution.



3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, members of staff and individuals who study, work or otherwise operate or wish to operate under the aegis of The Mico University College or who use or wish to use any of the institution's facilities or those who interact or wish to interact within said environment, regardless of the duration. This policy shall be applied in all teaching, learning, recruiting, on-boarding, promotions, decision-making and business activities.

4. DEFINITIONS

The Mico University College Policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and related policy statements will hereafter be referred to by the acronym DEI. Furthermore, the following definitions shall be applied as it relates *specifically* to this policy.

Diversity	Diversity includes the variety of attributes that exists among people, not limited to (in no particular order of significance): sex, gender identity, ethnicity, race, origin, geography, nationality, citizenship, age and generation, sexual orientation, ability status, cultural background, religious and philosophical belief system, marital and parental status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, language and accent, mental health, educational status, work habits, work experience, job function, thinking and personality types, political perspectives, and professional and political affiliations.
Equity	This refers to an approach whereby all members of the community, holistically or within subgroups, have access to the same opportunities and are not disadvantaged due to an unfair allocation of resources, dissemination of information or treatment.
Inclusion	This refers to an obvious and deliberate attempt to ensure that all members of the community feel valued and respected regardless of any attributes, perceived or assumed, that may be deemed to separate them others within the population.
Harassment	Any behaviour that hurts, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a person which has the effect of nullifying or impairing a person from benefiting their rights.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Any individual employed by The Mico University College in a permanent, temporary or contractual basis in any fulltime or part-time capacity.<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Academic Staff: <i>An employee whose primary assignment is instruction, research and scholarship. These staff members may hold a position on the establishment or may be employed on a yearly contract. This category of staff includes members who hold academic ranks with titles such as Lecturer, Department Head, Dean, Professor or any other academic rank.</i>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Administrative Staff: An employee who is employed in the non-academic operations of the institution. These staff members may hold a position on the establishment or may be employed on contract.– Ancillary Employee: An employee whose post is not academic or administrative and who provides support services for the operations of the institution.
Stakeholders	Any individual who interacts or wishes to interact with the institution. When qualified as <i>Other Stakeholders</i> , the term refers to individuals who are neither current staff nor students of the institution but are primarily external interests.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Recognizing the need to leverage the talents and skills of all employees and to protect the interests and perspectives of all students and stakeholders, The Mico is committed to creating an atmosphere wherein all individuals who operate within, visit or otherwise interact with the institution or its agents, can feel welcomed, respected and valued.

The Mico must adopt international best practices to attract and retain the participation of a diverse profile of student, faculty, staff and stakeholder populations. As such, this policy is guided by the following principles:

- a) A healthy work, study and business environment is marked by a strong commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, which should be demonstrated in all interactions, direct and indirect, with stakeholders both internal and external.
- b) A diverse workforce encourages excellence by bringing together unique and varied perspectives that facilitate meaningful exchange.
- c) The disclosure of any information related to one's personal attributes shall be treated with the strictest level of confidence to the furthest reasonable extent.
- d) The Mico must have knowledge and understanding of its constituents so that it can adjust its operations to provide the environment within which they participate, succeed and feel valued.
- e) Equal opportunity shall be granted to all stakeholders so that they are not disadvantaged in any way due to their differences or particular profile.
- f) The Mico shall not subject any individual to discrimination through its policies, programs, procedures, structures or decision. Every effort shall be taken to prevent a stakeholder from being put in a situation in which he/she is made to feel discriminated against.



An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational and societal goals.

6. APPLICATION

The Mico commits to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion by fostering an environment that understands and appreciates the role that diversity plays within The Mico community and within the wider society. At The Mico, a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment is one wherein all members of the community are allowed and given opportunities to exhibit attributes related to their individual profile. To this end, the institution undertakes to facilitate the following, through application of the DEI policy:

6.1 Voluntary Disclosure

The Institution shall facilitate voluntary disclosure of equal opportunity information by all stakeholders. Equal opportunity information refers to any detail about an individual which could potentially be used to discriminate against him/her. While disclosure is optional, it is highly encouraged as it will help The Mico to develop, enhance and monitor any diversity and equity programmes that may be put in place. Information submitted to the institution will be handled in accordance with the related institutional policies on privacy/confidentiality and third-party disclosure. The information will be retained securely and will enable measuring of equity strategies across the Institution. The institution shall not be liable for any experience resulting from the non-disclosure of equal opportunity information. Neither shall the institution be held liable for any experience not causally related to the disclosure of equal opportunity information. resulting from Disabled and physically challenged persons

Each disability shall be defined by the standards established by the relevant local authorities and which can be attested to by licensed medical practitioners.

- a) Students and staff must declare any disability which may impact his/her work or studies. Students must complete and submit the *Declaration of Disability Form (DDF)* while staff must declare in writing to the Human Resources Department along with the necessary supplementary documentation, especially if special accommodation is required. This disability may be temporary or permanent or it may be one that presently exists, previously existed or may exist in future or one that is imputed to that student/staff. With respect to students, The Registrar will necessarily transmit this information to other departments or individuals such as Deans and Invigilators who will require reasonable awareness of this impairment to effectively execute the provisions contained in this policy.
- b) While all information submitted will be treated with the highest levels of privacy and confidentiality, students may not necessarily be informed that his/her information is



being forwarded to personnel within the institution. Nonetheless, reasonable effort shall be made to restrict the number of persons needing access to this information.

- c) The institution commits to facilitating reasonable accommodation for movement, access to and use of facilities around the campus.

6.2 Culturally and linguistically diverse persons

The Institution shall produce all official communication, whether textual, graphical or verbal in English, the official language of the country and that adopted by the institution, however reasonable accommodation will be considered for non-English speakers where requested.

The institution shall promote cultural diversity and shall encourage and foster appreciation for various cultures.

6.3 Facilities Access and Use

The Mico recognizes that some buildings, especially older structures which were erected prior to this policy, were not designed with adequate facility for individuals of diverse physical ability.

- a) The institution commits to increasing wheelchair accessibility across the campus where practicable. In the event that the integrity of any structure is compromised by retrofitting, or if such modifications would result in certain safety concerns, the institution commits to providing a movable device, mechanical or otherwise that can facilitate access to the various campus facilities. All planned building modifications shall be made in accordance with the prevailing building codes stipulated by the relevant local authorities.
- b) The institution commits to facilitating access to appropriate technology for the use of library resources, online course material or other resources.

6.4 Religion and Religious Practice

The Mico is a non-denominational Christian institution and shall conduct its official events and other activities in keeping with this status, however it shall not impose religious practices upon any individual to whom this policy applies.

6.4.1 Rites

No member of the community shall be prohibited from observing any religious rite while on the campus, under the condition that:

- a) Observance of the rite does not create or lead to the creation of any unreasonable form of sensory disturbance to any class, office or other campus activity;
- b) It does not pose safety risks whether to the persons involved, onlookers, passers-by or any other user of the campus space;
- c) It takes into consideration all institutional guidelines regarding use of facilities, conduct of staff and student and any other policy or protocol governing campus activities.



- d) It does not violate any of Jamaica's laws.

6.4.2 Religious garments and adornments

With respect to the sartorial practices and religious garments that are adopted by adherents to any religion, stakeholders shall be allowed reasonable accommodation to don attire or to reasonably modify established uniform patterns in keeping with their religious beliefs. To the furthest extent possible, the features of this garment, attire or other adornment shall be consistent with the colours, fabric type, textures and styles of the established dress and uniform codes of the institution.

Where religious requirements necessitate a particular religious garment students and staff must submit a letter to The Registrar and the Human Resources Department respectively seeking consent to dress in a manner other than stipulated in the established dress code.

With regards to other forms of adornment to include, but not limited to, jewellery, tattoos, or other markings, whether these be permanent or temporary, reasonable effort shall be made to reduce any unnecessary sensory disturbance that these may cause.

6.4.3 Hair and headgear

With regards to hair styles and headwear, these must adhere to the institution's codes to the furthest extent possible. Hats and other head coverings are generally not allowed in indoor settings, however reasonable accommodation shall be made for students and staff who are required to wear such accessories within the campus space. Students or staff who are required to wear these accessories as part of their religious beliefs (or due to a declared health or physical condition) shall not be prohibited from wearing such garments. However, individuals should make every effort to reduce any unnecessary sensory disturbances by choosing muted colours and styles of minimal complexity, to the furthest extent possible.

6.4.4 Change of religious status

In the event that a student or member of staff has changed his/her religious inclination and believes that such change will significantly impact his/her interaction with other members of the community or the institution's processes, he/she is encouraged to notify, by way of letter, the Human Resources Department in the case of staff and The Registrar in the case of students the nature of this change and its possible implications. This letter must include:

- a) The critical practices or religious rites that must be observed by the individual, where these may affect his/her studies, work or business interactions;
- b) Any special garment, adornment or other artefact that must be reasonably displayed by the individual, especially those not captured in the institution's other established codes;
- c) Any reasonable requests of the institution which the individual believes would support his/her interaction with the institution or its agents; and



- d) The name, contact information and a person of contact of the legally registered governing body of that religious movement in Jamaica.

6.5 Examinations

Nothing in this policy or the Examinations Regulations shall exclude an individual from participating in examinations or other forms of academic assessment once they have met the eligibility requirements to do so.

- a) Where possible, the examinee shall, at least for the purposes of an examination environment, minimize the number and complexity of garments worn.
- b) In keeping with the institution's Examinations Regulations, students entering an examination venue who are adorned in special garments shall have these garments checked in private, by an individual of the same gender (or at the preference of the examinee) for any unauthorized material. Students and the invigilator both have the right to request an unbiased third-party to observe the checking process.
- c) The checking of any student or students shall not affect the scheduled start time of an examination or assessment procedure. Where the checking process takes more time than expected, due for instance to a larger than anticipated number of individuals needing to be checked, or a complex checking procedure due to the nature of the garments or artefacts worn, then the student(s) being checked shall be given the time lost to complete the assessment.
- d) To maintain the integrity of an examination or assessment procedure, the institution may require individuals to be checked or to remove various garments such as scarfs, ties or other garments or accessories (even if these are religious artefacts), medical devices or any other device or accessory which is allowable in the venue by virtue of the student's specific demographic profile (i.e., health condition, impairment, religion etc).
- e) The checking of any student shall be communicated by the Chief Invigilator or his/her designee and shall not be taken as discrimination or bias.

7. BREACH OF POLICY

All stakeholders who receive, or who are observed to have received, treatment inconsistent with the principles and values laid out in this Policy shall be afforded full opportunity to report any alleged offense committed against them. The Mico University College will respond to all breaches of this policy which are reported to it through any of the means identified below.

7.1 General Procedures

Institutional forms related to this policy will be maintained on the institution's website and in various offices to facilitate general access by all stakeholders. The DEI Policy and all related forms



shall provide opportunities for all stakeholders both internal and external to The Mico, to make formal complaints or grievance reports to the Institution.

7.2 Complaints and Grievance

- a) Students shall be guided by the *Student Complaints & Grievance Procedure* which shall be made available on the institution's website, through the Department of Student Services and in the Student Handbook.
- b) Staff shall be guided by the Human Resources Policy on *Grievance & Complaints*.
- c) All other stakeholders shall direct their complaints and grievances to the director of the accused office or department and copied to the relevant Office of the Vice President.

7.3 Investigating Procedures

Where a report has been made, it shall be investigated in a manner which allows the accused and the accuser an opportunity to voice their position.

- a) Breaches of policy shall be reported to the institution through the channels identified.
- b) The receiving office shall initiate the process towards resolution, which may involve, forwarding the complaint to another department for action.
- c) A review committee shall be constituted to examine the details of the case if the alleged breach is of such nature that it cannot be resolved through simple administrative action by the head of department of the accused individual or if the alleged breach is one that implicates the institution itself or a specific departmental practice.
- d) There shall be no retaliation against any accuser whether internal or external who in good faith, reports any breach of this policy. Any retaliation by an accused (or any stakeholder) shall be, in and of itself a breach of this policy, as well as of other regulations of this institution, such as the Employee Code of Conduct.
- e) Both the accused and accuser shall be allowed to defend his/her position and respond to any counter-arguments before judgements are made.
- f) Neither the accused nor the accuser shall be subject to victimization as a result of any reported breach of this policy.

7.4 Penalties

Where an offence has been reported, investigated and found to be a breach of policy, the institution shall, in keeping with applicable policies and local laws, take appropriate remedial, punitive or other corrective action to resolve the issue and prevent future occurrences.



8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Any information received by the institution through any of its departments or agents shall be appropriately handled in a manner consistent with this policy and shall necessarily be forwarded to any other office or appropriate individual for action. In addition, certain offices and personnel shall have special responsibilities regarding DEI.

8.1 The Offices of the Vice Presidents

- i. The Offices of the Vice Presidents shall, appropriately:
 - a) Receive annual reports from all departments of complaints of policy breaches submitted to the institution, in particular those submitted by *Other Stakeholders*.
 - b) Ensure that external stakeholders wishing to use the campus facilities are aware of and agree to abide by the stipulations of this policy.
 - c) Ensure equitable access to and inclusive participation of stakeholders in decision-making.

8.2 The Registrar

- ii. The Registrar shall:
 - a) Communicate equal opportunity information to the appropriate staff or office. For instance, communicating to the Deans or the Examinations and Transcripts Unit any information about a student that it will reasonably need to administer this policy.
 - b) Document all reported complaints of policy breaches brought to it by students and facilitate the relevant grievance resolution procedures.

8.3 The Human Resources Director

- iii. The HR Director shall:
 - a) Document all complaints of policy breaches brought to the HR Department by staff or other stakeholders.
 - b) Ensure that the profile and involvement of all categories of staff reflect a commitment to this policy and the diversity of the Jamaican population.
 - c) Take necessary steps to educate staff, and in particular department heads, about acceptable behaviour and treatment towards stakeholders of diverse backgrounds.
 - d) Provide equitable access to training opportunities and career development for all staff.
 - e) Provide workplace flexibility in accordance with applicable laws.
 - f) Ensure equity in staff recruitment, selection, classification, promotions and performance appraisals.

8.4 All Staff

- iv. All employees, including department heads, lecturers, administrators, etc. shall:
 - a) Provide a learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment of staff and students.



- b) Encourage and support the development of research, policy and curricula that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.
- c) Demonstrate and promote diversity, equity and inclusivity within the University College environment.
- d) Ensure that their behaviour and dealings with stakeholders are in accordance with the values of the institution and the statements of this policy.
- e) Ensure that they are fully aware of the provisions of this policy.
- f) Take appropriate action to mitigate against suspicion of discrimination or unfair treatment against any stakeholder.

9. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

This policy is supported by the following documentation:

- The Government of Jamaica Education Act
- The Mico Human Resources Policy
- The Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures
- [The Student Complaints and Grievance Form](#)
- [The Undergraduate Students Handbook](#)
- [The Graduate Students Handbook](#)
- [The Mico Website](#)
- [Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- The Mico Student Services Policy
- [The GOJ Disabilities Act](#)
- [The GOJ Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms \(Amendment\) Act, 2011\)](#)