CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON WOMEN APPLICATIONS AND ENTRY

1. PREAMBLE

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) recognises gender equity, inclusive access to higher education, and the empowerment of women as foundational imperatives for academic excellence, social justice, and national development.

The University is committed to establishing an institutional ecosystem that actively encourages, supports, and facilitates the application, admission, enrollment, and successful entry of female candidates across all undergraduate, postgraduate, professional, and vocational academic programs.

This Policy establishes the University's institutional strategy and binding regulatory measures to remove systemic barriers, eliminate gender bias in recruitment and admissions, promote female participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM), and guarantee equal entry opportunities across all campuses.

The Policy operates consistently with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Section 42), the National Gender Policy, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) entry guidelines, National Universities Commission (NUC) standards, the University's enabling legislation, and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- increase the proportion of female applicants and enrolled students across all academic disciplines;
- eliminate direct, indirect, or structural gender biases in University admissions and entry processes;
- implement targeted outreach, mentorship, and incentive schemes to encourage women applications, particularly in historically underrepresented STEM fields;
- ensure transparent, objective, and merit-based application review and screening procedures;
- provide supportive entry pathways and orientation frameworks tailored for female candidates;
- establish safeguards against gender-based harassment or intimidation during the application, screening, and registration phases; and
- provide institutional mechanisms for tracking, evaluating, and reporting gender parity metrics in student admissions.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies across all campuses, faculties, colleges, schools, institutes, and academic departments of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, and covers:

- all prospective female applicants seeking admission to undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma, and certificate programs;
- all University admissions officers, departmental screening committees, deans, and academic heads;
- outreach officers, University central admissions boards, and ICT portal administrators; and
- external partners, secondary school liaison bodies, and scholarship boards collaborating on student recruitment.

Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted as lowering statutory academic entry requirements or violating established NUC or JAMB regulatory benchmarks.

4. PRINCIPLES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN APPLICATIONS AND ENTRY

4.1 Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

The University guarantees that prospective female students shall enjoy equal opportunity in accessing application portals, sitting for Post-UTME screening, undergoing interviews, and securing admission into their chosen academic programs without bias based on gender, marital status, pregnancy, religion, or socio-economic background.

4.2 STEMM Encouragement and Target Outreach

Recognising the historical underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine, the University shall organize targeted secondary school outreach initiatives, female STEMM fairs, and preparatory guidance workshops to drive increased female applications into these fields.

4.3 Transparent and Bias-Free Admissions Screening

Admissions criteria and Post-UTME evaluation metrics shall be clear, objective, and standardized. Departmental admissions committees shall ensure balanced gender representation among screening panellists to eliminate implicit bias in interview or verification procedures.

5. SUPPORTIVE ENTRY PATHWAYS AND INCENTIVES

5.1 Bridging and Transition Programs

The University shall maintain supportive pre-degree, JUPEB, and diploma entry pathways designed to expand access for qualified female candidates from underserved rural communities across Anambra State and the wider region.

5.2 Female Access Scholarships and Financial Support

In collaboration with University donors, alumni associations, and state government bodies, COOU shall seek to expand fee waivers, entrance bursaries, and merit-based scholarships earmarked for high-performing prospective female applicants entering high-priority disciplines.

6. SAFEGUARDING AND APPLICANT SUPPORT

The University maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any form of extortion, sexual exploitation, or harassment targeted at prospective female applicants during Post-UTME screening, clearance, or physical registration. Secure and confidential channels shall be provided for applicants to report any improper solicitation or misconduct by admissions personnel.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROSPECTIVE FEMALE APPLICANTS

Female candidates applying for entry into the University shall:

a. satisfy all published academic UTME, O'Level, and Direct Entry requirements established by JAMB and the University;

b. submit authentic, verifiable credentials through the official University portal within specified deadlines; and

c. report any observed irregularities, bias, or improper conduct during the screening process to designated authorities.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The University Management shall:

a. ensure that all admission software, application forms, and promotional materials use gender-inclusive language and imagery;

b. enforce strict sanctions against staff members found guilty of gender discrimination or extortion during admissions;

c. provide safe, secure, and accessible campus registration centers and hostel facilities for incoming female students; and

d. publish annual disaggregated data on applicant numbers, admission offers, and enrollment rates by gender.

9. GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE OVERSIGHT

The University shall mandate the **Admissions Committee**, in conjunction with the **Gender and Diversity Directorate**, to:

a. monitor gender parity across application pools and admission lists for all faculties;

b. evaluate departmental admission ratios and recommend corrective recruitment strategies for underrepresented disciplines;

c. investigate complaints regarding gender bias or improper barriers encountered by female applicants; and

d. submit an annual Women Admissions and Entry Compliance Report to the Vice-Chancellor and University Senate.

10. PUBLICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

This Policy shall be published on the official University website and admissions portal, and included in prospective student orientation packages and admission handbooks. The University shall maintain a public policy control log showing approval dates and scheduled review periods.

11. REVIEW AND REVISION

This Policy shall be formally reviewed at least once every three years or earlier if required by changes in national higher education admissions guidelines, NUC directives, or University Senate decisions. Every review shall be officially documented and approved.



Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, Fnipr
Vice Chancellor **Date:** 24/10/2026