



Lupane State University

Building Communities through Knowledge

HIV AND AIDS POLICY



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TITLE:	HIV AND AIDS POLICY
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APPROVED BY:	SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE

Contents

1. Background
2. Objectives
3. Legal framework
4. Definitions
5. Obligations and Responsibilities of the University
6. Obligations and Responsibilities of Students and Staff
7. Employment and Staff
8. Admissions and Students
9. Confidentiality and Disclosure
10. Education and Awareness
11. Counselling, Care and Support
12. Treatment
13. Universal Precautions
14. Integration of HIV and AIDS into the Curriculum
15. Research
16. Community Service
17. Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

1. BACKGROUND

Zimbabwe is facing one of the most serious challenges in the form of HIV and AIDS. Lupane State University (LSU) is situated in one of the provinces equally affected by this pandemic where the high prevalence of HIV is placing a huge demand on all sectors of service delivery, economic development, teaching, learning and research. The University therefore, through this policy is committed to ensuring that its interventions of prevention, treatment, care, support and research actively address the ravages of the pandemic and help both staff and students to deal with its impact in a realistic and meaningful way. Through its core competencies LSU aims to ameliorate the impact of HIV/AIDS within the University, and within the broader community. The University will develop policies and practices based on principles of respect for human rights and dignity of people.

The fundamental principle is that of a comprehensive approach to HIV and AIDS with educational and preventive interventions as the foundation activities to safeguard the interests of the University, its staff and students. This policy should be read in conjunction with the National AIDS Policy. This policy expresses the University's recognition of its responsibility to facilitating access to HIV and AIDS information, prevention, treatment, care and support services for all staff and students, including direct provision of these services where available resources permit. Furthermore, this policy is the University's commitment to the development of a working and learning environment that is free of unfair discrimination, stigmatisation of HIV, and where people living with HIV and AIDS are assured of their rights being upheld and protected. The University is further committed to applying the same statutes, policies, procedures and regulations to students, prospective students and employees living with HIV and AIDS as are applied to persons with other disabling conditions.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To develop University frameworks and standards for HIV and AIDS information systems.
- 2.2 Protect and uphold the rights of staff and students directly or indirectly affected by HIV and AIDS.
- 2.3 Identify appropriate strategies and available institutional facilities for necessary interventions on HIV and AIDS related issues.
- 2.4 Offer opportunities for enhanced dissemination and use of sound HIV and AIDS information.
- 2.5 Support the country's realisation of National HIV and AIDS policy.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Lupane State University recognizes the existing legislation within Zimbabwe which applies to HIV and AIDS, and in terms of which this policy shall be applied.

- 3.1 This policy is informed by, but is not limited to:
 - The Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment Number 20 of 2013
 - The Labour Act, Chapter 28:01
 - The Occupational Health and Safety Act; and
 - The National HIV and AIDS Policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 The Policy means the Lupane State University HIV and AIDS Policy.
- 4.2 The University means Lupane State University.
- 4.3 Staff member refers to all those appointed by the University. (It excludes external contractors, visitors and honorary appointments).
- 4.4 A student means a person registered at Lupane State University for purposes of studying of which the possession of a valid University identity card is essential.
- 4.5 HIV means the Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

- 4.6 AIDS means the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, the later phase of HIV infection.
- 4.7 Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) means testing an individual for HIV voluntarily with the individual's permission, where such testing includes counselling before and after the test.
- 4.8 Confidentiality means keeping information private. Such information is protected by ethical, professional and legal considerations.
- 4.9 Informed consent means giving permission without coercion by an individual with full knowledge and understanding of the implications of giving such permission.
- 4.10 Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is the administration of antiretroviral medication to a person who has been exposed to HIV to prevent transmission of the disease. The provision of Post-exposure Prophylaxis is without prejudice to Lupane State University.
- 4.11 Unfair discrimination refers to any direct or indirect discrimination against anyone on the basis of their HIV status and/or one or more, but not exclusive to the grounds listed in Chapter 3, Section 23 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.
- 4.12 Universal precautions are standardized infection control and prevention measures, which limit the potential for the transmission of HIV from one person to another through contact with infected materials.
- 4.13 University AIDS Committee (UAC) is a consultative, representative body that oversees and monitors the implementation of the LSU HIV and AIDS Plan and Policy; and reports to the University Senate.
- 4.14 University AIDS Strategy Development Committee means the sub-committee of the University AIDS Committee responsible for providing technical expertise to the University AIDS Committee and the AIDS programme by continually updating the Plan in light of new information and discoveries.

4.15 Campus HIV and AIDS Working Groups (CHAWG) means a multi-stakeholder body in each campus responsible for HIV and AIDS activities and awareness campaigns in each campus.

4.16 ART Anti-Retroviral Treatment

5 OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

Lupane State University has an obligation to provide a safe working and study environment where employees and students living with HIV and AIDS are free from stigma and unfair discrimination. The University is committed to minimising exposure to HIV and to organise ongoing awareness and prevention activities for students and staff.

5.1 The University is committed to protecting the human rights and dignity of people living with HIV and AIDS and to creating a balance between the rights and responsibilities of those infected and affected.

5.2 Staff and students shall not be denied, directly or indirectly, opportunities to further their goals and objectives professionally or academically on the basis of their HIV status or disabling conditions.

5.3 The University may request a student or member of staff to take leave of absence in the interests of the individual's health.

5.4 Any special measures taken by the University in respect of a student or staff member's HIV and AIDS status or condition shall be based on objective medical facts and should promote equality, and between HIV and AIDS and other comparable health/medical conditions and discourage unfair discrimination of individuals living with HIV.

5.5 The University ensure that Departments or units whose academic and research programmes involve risk of exposure to HIV contaminated blood and body fluids are responsible for the education and training of those potentially at risk.

5.6 Disciplinary action shall be taken against any student or staff member who willfully undermines the privacy and dignity of another person on the basis of their known or perceived HIV status.

6 OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

Members of the University Community have the responsibility to protect themselves and others from HIV infection through all means possible and to become informed about all aspects of HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support, and alleviation of impact.

6.1 Students and employees living with HIV and AIDS are ethically, morally and legally obliged to behave in such a way as to pose no threat of infection to others. Both students and employees are urged to seek medical advice to ensure that they live as healthy, normal and productive a life as possible.

6.2 All members of the University community including those with HIV and AIDS are expected to perform the duties assigned to them. Unless medically justified, no student may use their HIV and AIDS status as an excuse for absence from scheduled classes, assignments and tests, examinations, study/course requirements or other academic activities. Likewise no member of staff shall use their HIV/AIDS status, unless medically justified, as an excuse for failing to present themselves for work or to complete their duties.

7 EMPLOYMENT AND STAFF

The University shall not require pre-employment or conduct compulsory testing for HIV among staff, but will promote a non-discriminatory workplace in which people living with HIV or AIDS are able to be open about their HIV status without fear of stigma or rejection.

7.1 All staff shall be encouraged to go for confidential Voluntary Confidential Counselling and Testing (VCT). The University may implement special VCT programmes to provide scientific information to monitor and assess the impact of the University's HIV and AIDS Plan in order to help with the improvement of existing intervention programmes. Such testing shall be implemented within current ethical legal rules and guidelines.

- 7.2 The HIV status of a prospective staff member shall not be an adverse consideration for the purposes of employment of such a staff member by the University and neither shall any member of staff be dismissed, denied benefits or their contract of employment discontinued on account of their HIV status.
- 7.3 If and when a staff member with HIV or AIDS becomes medically unfit to continue working under normal conditions, current legal provisions for alternatives shall be followed. If, however, the person is no longer able to work, the appropriate provisions in the conditions of service relating to termination of work on medical grounds and standard LSU's disability and incapacity procedures shall be invoked.
- 7.4 The HIV status of staff shall not be a consideration in respect of staff training and development, promotions and the awarding of financial aid or staff loans, where such loans are permitted and applicable.
- 7.5 Any transfer of a staff member on the basis of their HIV status shall be done, in consultation with the staff member, where this clearly serves and is in the best interests of such a staff member.

8 ADMISSIONS AND STUDENTS

The HIV status of prospective or returning students shall not be deemed relevant for purposes of the selection of such students into the University.

- 8.1 Known HIV status shall not be a consideration in the awarding of financial aid to students, nor is testing for HIV in respect of the awarding of student loans a prerequisite.
- 8.2. University Academic Regulations shall be applied impartially to all students regardless of their HIV status.
- 8.3. A student who has failed to fulfil their financial requirements as a result of being affected or infected with HIV and AIDS shall have the same rights as all other students.
- 8.4 Students living with HIV and AIDS are expected to attend classes in accordance with the University's rules and requirements.

- 8.5 HIV status shall not be a valid ground for exclusion from the University.

9 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

The University shall not coerce any staff or student to disclose their HIV status but will treat any disclosure of positive HIV status in strict confidentiality and prohibit discrimination and victimization on that basis.

- 9.1 When a staff member or student voluntarily discloses his/her positive HIV status, the information may not be disclosed to others including management or supervisors without the individual's written consent. However individuals will be encouraged to consider shared confidentiality in order to enable them to get assistance that they may require.
- 9.2 Voluntary disclosure of a staff member's or student's HIV status to the appropriate authority is encouraged and will be protected. Management will ensure an enabling environment in which the confidentiality of such information is ensured and that unfair discrimination is not tolerated.
- 9.3 Any breach of confidentiality shall be subject to the fullest extent and subjected to disciplinary process. The University will assist in ensuring that confidentiality is protected.

10 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The University shall continue to prioritise prevention interventions as key to mitigating the impact of the pandemic through initiatives and activities which inform staff and students of HIV and AIDS issues. This will include but not limited to workplace programmes for staff, provision and promotion of VCT for staff and students in all campuses, increasing accessibility to condoms and treating of sexually transmitted infections as well as prevention and treatment.

- 10.1 Information, education, and communication material relating to HIV and AIDS shall be made available to students and staff through the Campus HIV and AIDS Support Units in each campus. Staff members and students

will be encouraged to become involved in HIV & AIDS initiatives and activities on campuses and in their communities.

- 10.2 All new students and employees shall be invited to participate in awareness campaigns during orientation and induction days and the University shall maintain, as part of its website, information on HIV and AIDS activities, and links to local and international organizations.
- 10.3 Important international and national calendars days and other relevant commemorative days shall be used to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS.

11 COUNSELLING, CARE AND SUPPORT

Staff and students shall have access to free VCT services on-campus, and the University encourages staff and students to know their HIV status.

- 11.1 VCT shall be offered by the Campus VCT counsellor at the Campus clinic or other identified service providers.
- 11.2 All students and staff living with HIV shall have access to the University's Wellness Programme run at the campus clinics. HIV positive students and staff may also be referred to local health facilities for ongoing treatment.
- 11.3 The University shall facilitate the setting up of support groups for affected and/or infected members of the University community in each campus, but the University will not be able to provide the necessary palliative care and support. All efforts shall however be made to refer the individual to an appropriate environment such as a hospital, hospice or for home-based care.
- 11.4 Counselling and post-exposure prophylaxis shall be provided at the campus clinics for rape survivors and those who become accidentally exposed to the risk of HIV in their occupational environments.
- 11.5 Confidential supportive counselling, including bereavement counselling, shall be offered by the Counseling Centre and/or other identified service providers on an individual and/or group basis.
- 11.6 The level of the care and support offered by the University shall be determined by budgetary considerations, and the sustainability of such

care interventions. The University shall always strive towards a sustainable quality of care.

12 TREATMENT

The University shall ensure access to basic treatment, care and support services as set out in Items 11.1 and 11.2 to those members of staff and students needing such services. For ongoing ARV treatment or where additional treatment is required the necessary referrals to suitable ART sites and health facilities will be made.

12.1 Appropriate Post-exposure Prophylaxis shall be available for specified incidents of exposure to staff and students, at accessible venues within the University and/or at selected service providers including in cases of sexual assault, occupational injuries and other acts of violence.

12.2 Adequately equipped first aid resources shall be easily accessible, and the Campus Health Clinic (during office hours) and identified emergency medical service providers (after hours) shall be available to all staff and students, to deal with injuries that occur on campus with potential risk of HIV transmission.

13 UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

The University shall make available to all staff and students through the medium of electronic resources, and within Departments, Schools or Units, a description of Universal Precautions to be utilized in the event of human blood or bodily fluid spillages.

13.1 All blood and bodily fluids shall be treated as if they were potentially infectious, in order that no person is singled out and discriminated against and in order that all persons handling such blood and/or bodily fluids are protected.

13.2 All potential risks of transmission of HIV within the University shall be considered and appropriate measures taken, wherever possible, to minimize the exposure of staff and students and members of the public to such risks including minimizing the risks as a result of contact sport.

14 INTEGRATION OF HIV AND AIDS INTO THE CURRICULUM

An integrated response to HIV and AIDS within the curricula of the University shall be developed and mainstreamed, with the appropriate assistance and guidance of national norms and standards that are developed through a consultative process with other tertiary institutions, and those with expertise within the University.

14.1 In response to the need to produce graduates that are competent to deal with the reality of HIV and AIDS and to meet the demands of the society, the University shall participate in new fields of study around HIV and AIDS and or expand existing fields of study.

14.2 The academic programmes shall include modules and/ or courses on HIV and AIDS in order to provide all students, irrespective of their field of study, with the opportunity to raise their awareness of HIV and AIDS.

14.3 The university shall provide support to departments and staff to develop and implement plans to integrate HIV and AIDS issues into their specific curricula.

15 RESEARCH

15.1 The University is committed to undertaking extensive empirical and operational public health, biomedical and social science research on HIV and AIDS. Policies, plans and guidelines shall be developed to support HIV and AIDS research underway and create mechanisms, which encourage more research to be undertaken by staff and students at the University.

15.2 The University shall collect HIV and AIDS related data on staff and students through surveys and access to health and personnel records subject to approved security and confidentiality requirements and ethical procedures.

16 COMMUNITY SERVICE

The University commits itself to collaborate with the community in training and research on HIV and AIDS. It is important that there is full community support and participation in the HIV and AIDS programmes and the support should transcend various communities and community structures. The University shall share its experiences, best practices and its skills where applicable, with all AIDS service providers.

17 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy shall be given operational effect by the University's AIDS Programme.

- 17.1 The University's AIDS Committee shall be responsible for policy advice and policy implementation.
- 17.2 The Campus HIV and AIDS Coordinators shall be responsible for the coordination of HIV and AIDS activities at the campus level in conjunction with other relevant structures in each campus, and together with the Campus HIV and AIDS Working Groups be responsible for campus specific HIV and AIDS activities and programmes.
- 17.3 The Committee of the HIV and AIDS programme shall be responsible for producing an annual report that describes all initiatives undertaken by the University in HIV and AIDS prevention, care and support, research and mitigation of impact.
- 17.4 The Committee of the HIV and AIDS programme shall be responsible for providing leadership in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy and plan.
- 17.5 The LSU HIV and AIDS Strategic Development Committee and the Campus HIV and AIDS Working Groups will advise the Director of the HIV and AIDS programme in identifying areas of concern that require future intervention.
- 17.6 The University shall ensure that there is an adequate budget for the implementation of the policy.

- 17.7 The Committee of the HIV and AIDS programme shall work closely with the Dean of Students and the Senior Assistant Registrar of Human Resources to ensure that all current and future students and staff are provided with copies of this policy as well as training regarding HIV and AIDS prevention, care, support and impact alleviation.
- 17.8 This policy, as well as relevant sections of the University conditions of service, shall be evaluated and regularly reviewed for relevance to national and global developments in the field of HIV and AIDS.
- 17.9 The policy shall be reviewed as and when necessary.

18 INTERPRETATION

The interpretation of this HIV and AIDS Policy rests with the office of the Registrar.

19 EFFECTIVE DATE

The policy shall take effect on the date it is signed by the Chairperson of the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee.

20 REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed as and when the need arises.

Approved: _____



Chairperson – Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee

Date: _____

