

This article explores concerns about gender inequality in Zimbabwean state universities. The researcher's interest arose from the realization of persistent gender inequalities despite initiatives to close gender gaps. Of particular concern is the conceptualization and operationalization of gender equality in institutions. Focusing only on student admissions sector, this paper critically surveys the experiences of the departmental chairpersons and students who enrolled through affirmative action, their vision of gender equality and the impact thereof on the inclusion of the said students in the mainstream. The study applied a gender perspective to development as well as in-depth and focus group interviews with purposively sampled stakeholders. The findings of the study shed light on the adopted tailoring model of gender equality elusive due to the exclusion of the students from the mainstream. Based on the findings, useful recommendations are made to resuscitate the almost paralyzed gender equality of the institutions.