

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

1.0 Introduction

The college is dedicated to provide equal opportunities and to create an environment in which all the staff, students and those for whom the college has a special responsibility (for example visiting academics and students – henceforth referred to as “visitors”) are treated with dignity and respect and in which they can study and work free from any kind of discrimination, harassment, or victimization. All the members of College are responsible for safeguarding this policy and should act in compliance with the policy guidance in the course of their daily work or study, assuring and cultivating an environment in which the dignity of other staff, students, and visitors is esteemed. Offensive behaviour will not be tolerated. Harassment in any form is a serious offence which is punishable under the College’s disciplinary procedures.

This Policy, and the Code of Conduct which accompanies it, apply to the academic and office staff of the College, undergraduate and graduate students, and all others for whom the College is responsible. References to ‘academic staff’ include Principal / Teacher-in-Charge, Full time and Part time teachers and Guest lecturers, who teach the students of the College.

The College is committed to making all staff and students aware of this policy and the associated guidance and must aspire to provide effective guidance and briefing on it. The College takes measures to ensure that both the policy and guidance are fully understood and implemented. The policy and guidance will be brought to the attention of all staff and students and are available on the College web-site.

Management of the College and all occupying positions of responsibility or seniority, including students who fall into these categories, have specific responsibilities. These include setting a good personal example, making it clear that harassment will not be tolerated, being familiar with, explaining, and offering guidance on this policy and the consequences of breaching it, investigating reports of harassment, taking corrective action if needed, and ensuring that victimisation does not occur as a result of a complaint.

1.1 Definition of Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, race, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age that violates a person’s dignity or creates an threatening, hostile, degrading, embarrassing or offensive environment.

Harassment on grounds of sex, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age may amount to illegal discrimination. Harassment may also breach other legislation and may in some circumstances be a criminal offence. Harassment may occur through the use of internet, email, or telephone.

The other person's motives are not the main factor in determining if behaviour amounts to harassment. Just because certain behaviour may be acceptable to the alleged harasser or another person does not mean it is not harassment. Being under the influence of alcohol or otherwise intoxicated will not be admitted as an excuse for harassment, and may be regarded as an aggravating feature. Bullying may be characterised by offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power through means intended to demoralize, humiliate, degrade or injure the recipient. It includes any behaviour which makes someone else feel threatened, frightened, humiliated or taken undue advantage of. Some common forms of verbal abuse include verbal abuse; taunting; setting impossible deadlines or objectives; withholding key information or providing false information.

The college will prevent any kind of victimization that may issue from making a complaint or in assisting a complainant in an investigation. Victimization occurs specifically when a person is treated less favourably because he/she has asserted his/her rights under this guidance, either in making a complaint or in assisting a complainant in an investigation. The College will protect any member of staff, student, or visitor from victimisation for reporting a grievance

Sexual harassment has been characterised as a predominantly degrading and unacceptable form of treatment, and is unacceptable to the College, as well as illegal, such that a victim may bring legal proceedings. If the conduct amounts to assault it may also comprise a criminal offence. All those to whom this Policy and the accompanying Code of Practice apply are under a duty not to engage in sexual harassment. Complaints that sexual harassment has occurred between persons to whom this Policy and the accompanying Code of conduct apply will be taken seriously by the College, and wherever inappropriate may result in disciplinary proceedings. The College will monitor the incidence of sexual harassment in the College, and the resolution of complaints by the appointed Advisors.

Harassment may not be directed at them specifically, but that they have witnessed it and which violated their dignity. It may include unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which the recipient finds intimidating, hostile or offensive, ranging from unwelcome sexual advances, unpleasant or derogatory remarks, to the display of offensive material of an explicitly sexual nature. Such conduct may be physical, verbal or nonverbal. An aggravating feature of some cases of sexual harassment may be the abuse of a position of authority or trust. The College policy dictates that the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equality Act cover homosexual as well as heterosexual harassment.

Reasonable and proper management instructions will be administered in a fair and proper way, or reasonable and proper review of a member of staff's or a student's work and/or performance will not constitute harassment. Behaviour will not amount to harassment if the conduct complained of could not reasonably be perceived as offensive.

In brief, examples of behaviour that may constitute harassment are:

- Verbal or physical threats;
- Insulting, abusive, embarrassing or patronising behaviour or comments;
- Offensive gestures, language, rumours, gossip or jokes;
- Humiliating, intimidating, demeaning and/or persistent criticism;
- Open hostility;
- Suggestive comments or body language;
- Isolation or exclusion from normal work or study place,
- Publishing, circulating or displaying pornographic, racist, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive pictures or other materials;
- Unwanted physical contact, ranging from an invasion of space to a serious assault

(The above list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

1.2 Advice to individuals who may be suffering one or more forms of harassment

Individuals may find it embarrassing to discuss whether certain behaviour amounts to harassment. The first step may be to discuss the matter in confidence with a friend or colleague who is familiar with the College setting. Members of staff may want to discuss the matter with immediate superiors, College Management, colleagues. Students may want to discuss the matter with the teacher or any other college officials or their mentors. Student mentors may provide the required support.

2.0 Written Complaints

2.1 Format of Complaints

Written complaints take the form of a letter or memorandum describing the conduct on which the complaint is based. It will include:

- the date(s) and place(s) on which the offensive conduct occurred,
- the names of any witnesses, and the name of the respondent
- any efforts to resolve the complaint and the results of these efforts
- if appropriate, the specific outcome the complainant seeks.

2.2 Filing of Complaints

Students: As noted above, complaints against undergraduate students should be filed to the Mentor teacher or the Head of the Department.

Employees: Complaints against employees should be filed to the principal/Teacher-in-Charge.

2.3 Notification of Respondent

Within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of the complaint, co-ordinator after receiving the complaint will notify the respondent in writing, advise the respondent of the name of the complainant, the nature of the allegations, refer the respondent to this policy, and provide a copy of the complaint. The Harassment Coordinator will receive a copy of this correspondence, and, upon its receipt, will confide with the complainant and the respondent independently to review options for resolution of the complaint. The complainant, with the assistance of the Harassment Coordinator, will choose the option he or she prefers, subject to the right of the respondent to request mediation or the right of the respondent or the G.B. Authorised signatories to request the appointment of a Harassment Hearing Committee (Grievance Redressal Committee). The respondent will also be advised that any speech or conduct threatening or constituting retaliation against the complainant will be regarded as a serious Either the complainant or the respondent may request the Redressal Coordinator to attempt resolution of the complaint through mediation. Either party may decline to participate, and the Harassment Coordinator/Principal reserves the right to decline mediation if the Harassment Coordinator deems that it is not appropriate as to the particular complaint. If the parties agree to mediate and in good faith efforts to mediate the complaint are ongoing, the Redressal Coordinator may defer other complaint resolution options. If, through mediation, a settlement is agreed to by both parties and approved by the Redressal Coordinator, no further option for resolution will be available. The case will be recorded in the institutional tally and institutional memory file.

If no settlement is reached, the complainant may choose either the Administrative Resolution or the Hearing Committee option.

2.3.1 Administrative Resolution

The complainant has the exclusive privilege of choosing the administrative resolution option, subject to the right of the Redressal Coordinator to determine that administrative resolution is not appropriate in the given case or the right of the respondent or the Teacher-in-Charge /

Principal to request the appointment of a Harassment Hearing Committee (see Hearing Committee, below).

In an Administrative Resolution, the Teacher-in-Charge / Principal with whom the complaint is filed will review the complaint with the Harassment Coordinator and the complainant and will also meet with the respondent. The Coordinator will then seek to resolve any factual disputes by interviewing witnesses and reviewing documents in order to establish the credibility of the parties. The Coordinator will ordinarily complete this investigation within fourteen (15) working days of notification of the respondent and determine whether the prevalence of evidence indicates that harassment occurred.

After completing the investigation, the Teacher-in-Charge / Principal will meet with the complainant and respondent, either together or separately, to discuss an appropriate resolution of the complaint. After this meeting(s), the Teacher-in-Charge / Principal will prepare a statement of the facts and a conclusion.

2.3.2 Possible Findings

If harassment is the finding, the Harassment Coordinator will search for any prior history of infractions in the institutional memory file. The Redressal Coordinator will then recommend a resolution in writing and deliver the recommendation to the Teacher-in-Charge / Principal.

Teacher-in-Charge / Principal will review and accept or reject the Coordinator's recommendation. Decision is ordinarily made within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of the coordinator's recommendation. The decision will be informed in writing to the complainant, the respondent and the Harassment Coordinator. The case will be recorded in both the institutional tally and the institutional memory file.

If it is found that there are insufficient grounds to support the claim of harassment, the parties will be so informed in writing and the complaint will be dismissed. The complaint will be recorded in the institutional tally and in the institutional memory file.

2.4 ICC or Internal Complain Committee under The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

Principal / Teacher-in-Charge will decide whether the whole matter and the proceedings are forwarded to the Internal Complain Committee under The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

- The Committee is required to complete the inquiry within a time period of 90 days.
- On completion of the inquiry, the report will be sent to the employer or the District Officer, as the case may be, they are mandated to take action on the report within 60 days.

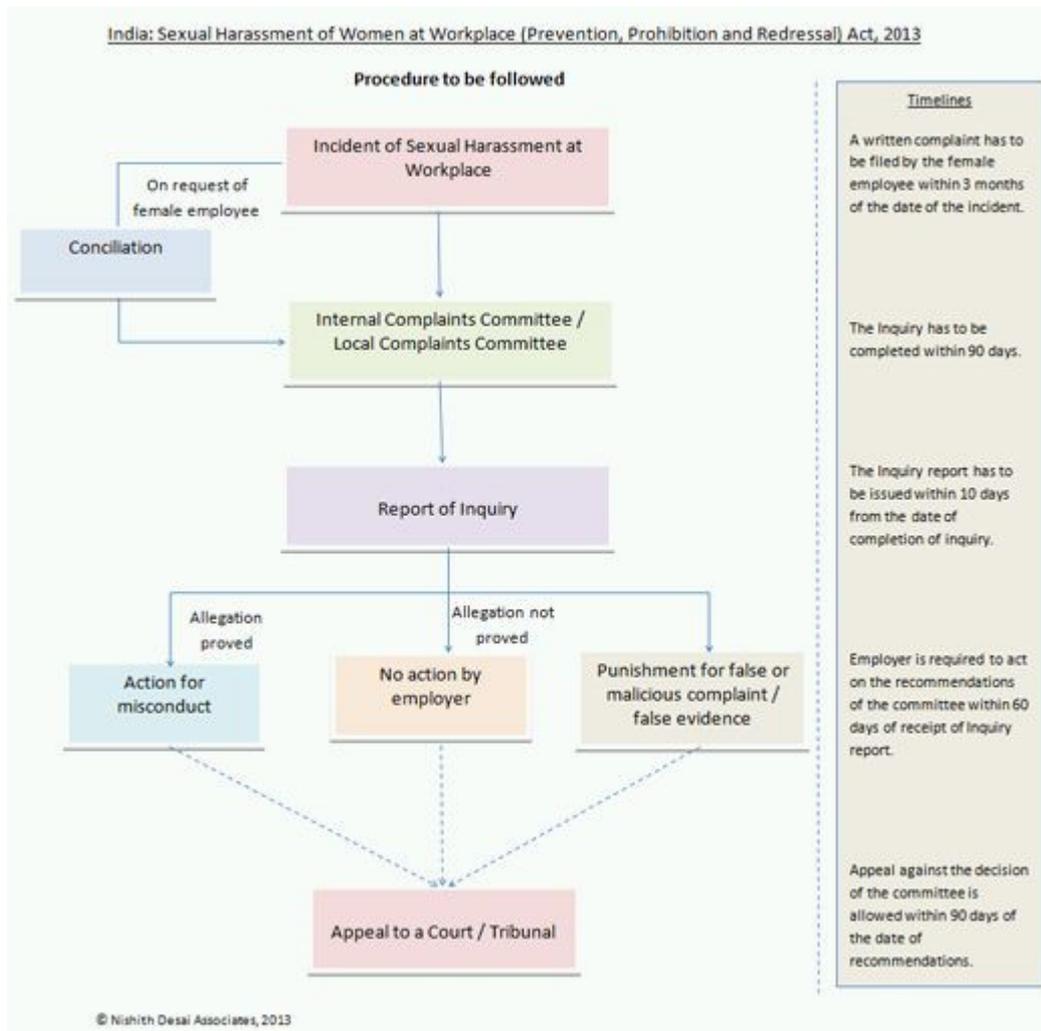
- The college is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 10 or more employees. The District Officer is required to constitute a Local Complaints Committee at each district, and if required at the block level.
- The Complaints Committees have the powers of civil courts for gathering evidence.
- The Complaints Committees are required to provide for conciliation before initiating an inquiry, if requested by the complainant.
- Penalties have been prescribed for employers. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Act shall be punishable with a fine of up to 50,000. Repeated violations may lead to higher penalties and cancellation of licence or registration to conduct business.

2.4.1 Process for Complaint and Inquiry

Please refer to the following flowchart which provides, in brief, the process to be followed by the aggrieved employee to make the complaint and by the employer to inquire into the complaint. The law allows female employees to request for conciliation in order to settle the matter although a monetary settlement should not be made as a basis of conciliation.

2.4.1.1 Action against Frivolous Complaints

So as to ensure that the protections contemplated under the Sexual Harassment Act do not get misused, provisions for action against “false or malicious” complainants have been made.



Before appealing to the court, if the situation demands college authority can refer the case to the Women’s commission.

2.4.2 Employer’s Obligations

In addition to ensuring compliance with the other provisions stipulated, the Sexual Harassment Act casts certain obligations upon the employer to,

1. provide a safe working environment
2. display noticeably at the workplace, the penal consequences of indulging in acts that may constitute sexual harassment and the composition of the Internal Complaints Committee
3. organize workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for sensitizing employees on the issues and implications of workplace sexual harassment and organizing orientation programmes for members of the Internal Complaints Committee
4. Treat sexual harassment as misconduct under the service rules and initiate action for misconduct.

The employer is also required to monitor the timely submission of reports by the ICC.

If an employer fails to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee or does not comply with any provisions contained therein, the Sexual Harassment Act prescribes a monetary penalty of up to INR 50,000 (approx. US\$1,000). A repetition of the same offence could result in the punishment being doubled and / or de-registration of the entity or revocation of any statutory business licenses.

2.5 Hearing Committee

If the Principal / Teacher-in-Charge decides that the situation is not so grave to forward to the Internal Complain Committee, principal / Teacher-in-Charge will appoint a Harassment Hearing Committee to review the case and, after determining the facts, to make a recommendation.

2.5.1 Composition of Hearing Committee

The Teacher-in-Charge / Principal will appoint a five-member committee to hear the case. The members will be Teacher-in-Charge / Principal, the harassment coordinator and three members selected from the Governing body members (Preferably external members).

2.5.2 Committee Procedures

- The Harassment Coordinator will provide Committee members with copies of the complete policy on Discriminatory Harassment; deliver to the Chairperson of the Hearing Committee a complete set of documents in the case; assist the Chairperson in scheduling a hearing, ordinarily within fourteen (14) days of the request for a hearing; assist the Chairperson in identifying the witnesses whom the complainant and respondent intend to call; and identify other persons who might assist the Committee.

- The hearing will be held, if possible, on consecutive working days and will be closed to persons other than those participating. However, either party may be accompanied by an advisor and/or legal coordinator, with whom he or she may consult, upon request, at reasonable times during the hearing. The intention to be accompanied by legal counsel or an advisor must be communicated to the Chairperson at least two (2) days prior to the hearing.

Advisors and legal counsel may neither address the Committee nor question witnesses.

- The hearing will begin with the presentation of the complainant's case and be followed by the respondent's response. The Committee will then question both parties and give the parties an opportunity to question each other, provided, however, that upon the request of the complainant, the Committee shall establish an alternative questioning procedure if the complainant elects not to directly confront the respondent

- Witnesses will not be present except during their testimony. Witnesses, beginning with those of the complainant, will relate their knowledge of relevant facts through questions

posed both by the Committee and by both parties. Once the Committee is satisfied that all relevant information has been presented, both parties may present summary statements and/or briefs to the Committee

- The Committee will meet privately to determine the facts and the extent to which they constitute discriminatory harassment under a preponderance of evidence standard.

2.5.3 Possible Findings

If the Committee determines that discriminatory harassment has occurred, the will be given access to the record of any prior infractions by the respondent. The Committee will then assess the seriousness of the case based on the severity of the harassment, the extent to which it was a single or repeated incident, and any record of past infractions. In consultation with the Harassment Coordinator, the Committee will develop a recommendation on sanctions. (Possible sanctions include: letter of warning, letter of reprimand, mandatory counseling or training, reparation, suspension, dismissal or termination, any combination of these sanctions, as well as other appropriate alternatives.)

The Committee will communicate its report and recommendation to the Governing Body.

If the Governing Body accepts the report, it will determine and impose the sanctions. Where appropriate, the necessary steps will also be taken to reverse actions which the respondent may have taken in the harassment of the complainant (e.g., restoration of rights or privileges, review of academic or personnel evaluations). The Principal / Teacher-in-Charge will send written notice of the resolution of the complaint to the respondent, within ten (10) working days after the decision of Governing Body. The Harassment Coordinator will record the case in the institutional tally and the institutional memory file.

If it is determined that there are insufficient grounds to support the claim of harassment, the parties will be so informed in writing and the complaint will be dismissed. The complaint will be recorded in the institutional tally and in the institutional memory file. If it is determined that a claim of harassment is knowingly false, the Hearing Committee will recommend appropriate sanctions to the complainant's area and a notation will be made in the complainant's file. This action will be recorded in the institutional tally and in the institutional memory file.

2.6 Procedures for Appeal

Respondent or complainant can appeal to the Governing Body in the following grounds

- The decision lacked a factual basis
- it did not conform to the procedural requirements of this policy
- it was based on bias

- it violated the respondent's academic freedom

A formal appeal must be filed in writing within fourteen (14) working days after the respondent is informed of the decision.

Students: Students may appeal to the Redressal Coordinator who will either sustain or reverse the decision, or refer the case back to the Governing Body for

Student Affairs for further review and resubmission.

Faculty: For a sanction other than dismissal, faculty may appeal to the Principal. If the sanction is dismissal by the President during the term of a contract, faculty may appeal to the Faculty Hearing Committee

Non-Teaching Staff: Employees may appeal to the Principal, who will either sustain or reverse the decision, or refer the case back to the Governing Body for further review and resubmission.

3. Summary of Record Keeping

3.1 Institutional Tally

Once a year, the Harassment Coordinator will report upon the number of discriminatory harassment complaints filed in the previous twelve (12) months. This report will not include names or identifying facts, but will include: the nature of the allegation; the status of the parties involved (e.g., faculty, staff); and whether or not discriminatory harassment was the finding.

3.2 Institutional Memory

The need to identify repeat offenders requires that the Harassment Coordinator keep a central file, separate from individual files. This file will include the names of individuals involved in written or unwritten harassment complaints.

3.3 Individual Records

No notations or records will be placed in individual files in the case of unwritten complaints, whether or not the situation is resolved. In written complaints, a guilty finding and/or the sanctions imposed will be recorded in the respondent's file. Similarly, a finding that a knowingly false charge has been filed will be recorded in the complainant's file.

3.4 Policy Dissemination

The substance of this policy is included in the college website and handbook.

3.5 Education and Awareness

Students and faculties are briefed about the harassment policy and the working of the Grievance Redressal Cell during induction program.