

## **Internal Committee: 'Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013'**

The Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) at Poornima University was established in 2014 in accordance with the 'Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013'. In addition to this Act, the ICC follows the principles of the earlier Vishakha guidelines to address issues of sexual harassment in the workplace and ensure gender equality. The IC is responsible for addressing complaints of sexual harassment and raising awareness about this important issue. The Act outlines the composition of these committees, the procedure for filing complaints, and the steps for conducting inquiries in a timely manner.

### **What Constitutes Sexual Harassment?**

Sexual harassment includes one or more unwelcome actions or behaviors, whether explicit or implied:

- Physical contact and advances
- A request or demand for sexual favors
- Making sexually colored remarks
- Showing pornography
- Any unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature

Certain conditions, if they accompany or are connected to acts of sexual harassment, may also amount to sexual harassment, including:

- Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment
- Implied or explicit threat of adverse consequences in employment
- Implied or explicit threats about present or future employment status
- Interference with work or creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment
- Humiliating treatment likely to affect health or safety

## Objectives of the Committee

1. To provide a neutral, confidential, and supportive environment for members of the campus community who may have experienced sexual harassment.
2. To advise complainants on the resolution options available, as outlined by the legislation.
3. To ensure fair, impartial, and timely resolution of sexual harassment complaints.
4. To offer counseling and support services on campus.
5. To provide students, faculty, and staff with updated and comprehensive information on sexual harassment.
6. To promote awareness through educational initiatives that fosters a safe, respectful campus environment.

The committee is committed to informing the campus community about their right to a respectful work and learning space. It emphasizes that by practicing respect and exercising empathy in interactions, we can avoid causing harm and help create a campus free of sexual harassment.

## Functioning of ICC

1. Implement the *Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013*.
2. **Complaint Redressal:** In accordance with 'The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013', appropriate actions will be taken once a complaint is filed.
3. **Dissemination of Information:** This includes the production, distribution, and circulation of educational materials, posters, and handouts to the campus community.
4. **Awareness Workshops:** Organized for faculty, non-teaching staff, and students, these workshops aim to foster a non-threatening, respectful, and collaborative atmosphere for learning.
5. **Counseling:** Confidential counseling is provided, recognizing the sensitivity of sexual harassment cases, which are often underreported. Counseling offers a safe space for the aggrieved to discuss their experience and its impact.
6. **Report Submission:** Submit reports to the University

Through these initiatives, the committee works to ensure a harassment-free campus environment.

## **Composition of the Internal Complaints Committee**

The ICC will consist of the following members, nominated by the Vice Chancellor:

1. A Presiding Officer (a senior female professor or senior administrative officer).
2. Two members from among the employees, preferably those committed to women's welfare, experienced in social work, or with legal knowledge.
3. One member from a non-governmental organization (NGO) or association dedicated to women's causes or familiar with issues related to sexual harassment.

## **Who Can File a Complaint with the Internal Complaints Committee?**

Any student, service provider, teaching, or non-teaching staff member may file a complaint against a student, service provider, teaching, or non-teaching staff.

## **Procedure of Filing a Complaint**

1. Any aggrieved woman can file complaint in writing, to the ICC, within a period 3 months from the date of incident (sexual harassment at work place).
2. If she is unable to make a complaint in writing, the ICC will provide all possible assistance to her for making the complaint in writing.
3. If the ICC is satisfied that the circumstances were such, which prevented the woman from filing a complaint within a period of 3 months, it may extend the time limit not exceeding three months.
4. The complainant needs to submit the complaint along with the supporting documents and names and addresses of the witnesses to the ICC. On receipt of the complaint, the Committee will send one of the copies to the respondent within a period of seven working days and ask the respondent to file his reply to the complaint along with his list of documents and names and addresses of witnesses, within a period not exceeding ten working days from the date of receipt of the complaint by him. Legal practitioner is not allowed to represent the case at any stage of the proceedings before the Committee.

## **Redressal Process**

1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
2. Conduct a preliminary review.
3. Initiate conciliation (if requested by the complainant and agreed upon).
4. Inquiry process, including interviews with parties and witnesses.
5. Submit finding in writing within 90 days.
6. Recommend actions based on finding, such as disciplinary measures, counseling or apology letters.

## **Process for Findings and Recommendations**

### **Findings:**

- The ICC must determine whether the complaint is upheld, not upheld, or inconclusive.
- Both parties will be given the opportunity to respond to the findings before they are finalized.

### **Recommendations:**

- If the complaint is not upheld, no further action will be recommended.
- If upheld, recommendations may include:
  - Disciplinary actions such as written apologies, reprimands, warnings, or censures.
  - Suspension of promotions, increments, or termination.
  - Counseling or community service.
  - Compensation for the complainant based on factors such as mental trauma, medical expenses, and loss of career opportunities.

## **Reporting and Confidentiality**

### **Report:**

- The ICC will submit a detailed report within 90 days of receiving a complaint. This will include the complaint's aspects, inquiry procedures, findings, and recommendations.
- The report must be acted upon within 60 days by the employer or designated officer.

### **Confidentiality:**

- The Act prohibits disclosure of the complaint's contents, the identities of parties involved, and inquiry details. Violations will lead to penalties.
- Information regarding justice achieved can only be disseminated without revealing identities.

## **Preventive Measures**

1. Conduct quarterly ICC meetings and submit reports to the University.
2. Prepare an annual report detailing complaints and resolutions.
3. Organize sensitization programs for staff and students.
4. Maintain vigilance on extended working hours and ensure workplace safety.
5. Encourage open communication between staff and students to address concerns proactively.
6. Install complaint boxes and registers in accessible locations.

## **Contact Information**

- **Women Cell**

Poornima University, Jaipur

- **Telephone-** 7986005928

- **E-MAIL-** [womencell@poornima.edu.in](mailto:womencell@poornima.edu.in)

- **Timings-**The office hours are 8:30 to 3:30.

