



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to outline the procedures, roles, and responsibilities of the **Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH)** within the institution. The CASH is established to ensure a safe, secure, and respectful environment free from any form of sexual harassment for all students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. This SOP aims to address and resolve any complaints related to sexual harassment efficiently, confidentially, and fairly, ensuring justice for all parties involved.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all members of the institution, including:

- Students
- Faculty members
- Administrative staff
- Visitors and contractors
- Any other stakeholders interacting with the institution

The committee will handle any grievance related to sexual harassment within the institution's premises, events, or in connection with the institution's activities outside the campus.

3. Definitions

- **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome act or behavior of a sexual nature, whether physical, verbal, or non-verbal, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Physical advances, unwanted touching, or assault
 - Sexual jokes, comments, or innuendos
 - Display of sexually explicit material
 - Stalking or following
 - Unsolicited and inappropriate physical contact



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- **Complaint:** A formal or informal allegation of sexual harassment raised by an individual (complainant) against another (respondent).
- **Respondent:** The person who is alleged to have committed an act of sexual harassment.
- **CASH (Committee Against Sexual Harassment):** A body formed to deal with complaints of sexual harassment and ensure proper investigation and resolution in a fair and confidential manner.

4. Structure and Composition of the Committee

The CASH should consist of the following members:

- **Chairperson:**
 - Usually a senior faculty member or an external expert in law, gender issues, or human rights.
 - Responsible for overseeing the functioning of the committee and ensuring adherence to the SOP.
- **Faculty Representatives:**
 - At least two faculty members who are trained in gender sensitivity and sexual harassment issues.
 - Responsible for assisting in the investigation and resolution of complaints.
- **Staff Representatives:**
 - At least one representative from the staff community to ensure diversity and inclusivity in decision-making.
- **External Member:**
 - A person from outside the institution, preferably from a legal, social, or advocacy background, to maintain impartiality and objectivity.
- **Student Representative:**
 - At least one student member to ensure the perspectives and concerns of students are adequately represented.

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- **Counselor or Psychological Support Officer:**
 - Provides emotional support and counseling to the complainant (and possibly the respondent) during the process.
- **Administrative Officer/Registrar:**
 - Responsible for documentation, maintaining records, and facilitating communication with relevant stakeholders.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Chairperson:**
 - Ensures that the committee functions as per the legal provisions and institutional policies.
 - Takes the final call on matters related to investigation, reports, and resolution.
 - Monitors and ensures that the investigation process is impartial and timely.
- **Committee Members (Faculty, Staff, External, and Student Representatives):**
 - Participate in the investigation process and provide input based on their area of expertise or role.
 - Maintain confidentiality and adhere to the ethical standards of the committee's operations.
- **Counselor/Psychological Support Officer:**
 - Offers psychological and emotional support to the complainant and respondent.
 - Helps mitigate any emotional stress and guides both parties through the grievance process.
- **Administrative Officer/Registrar:**
 - Maintains records of all complaints, inquiries, and decisions.
 - Facilitates correspondence, including communicating the outcome of the investigation to the concerned parties.

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6. Sexual Harassment Complaint Handling Process

6.1 Filing a Complaint

• 6.1.1 Complaint Submission:

Complaints of sexual harassment can be submitted via the following methods:

- **Written Complaint:** Complaints can be submitted in writing (physical or email) to the CASH.
- **Online Platform:** A dedicated online portal where complaints can be lodged.
- **Direct Reporting:** The complainant may approach any CASH member directly, who will help file the complaint.
- **Anonymous Reporting:** An option for anonymous submission may be provided, ensuring that the complainant's identity is protected.

• 6.1.2 Complaint Content:

The complaint should include the following information:

- Full name and contact details of the complainant
- Date, time, and place of the incident(s)
- Name(s) of the respondent(s)
- A detailed description of the alleged sexual harassment incident(s)
- Any evidence, if available (e.g., photographs, messages, recordings)

• 6.1.3 Acknowledgment:

The CASH will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **48 hours** of filing and provide the complainant with a reference number for tracking the grievance.

6.2 Preliminary Inquiry

• 6.2.1 Initiating Inquiry:

Upon receiving a complaint, the CASH will conduct a preliminary inquiry within **7 working days** to assess the seriousness of the allegation. If the issue can be resolved informally through counseling, the committee may recommend such actions.

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- **6.2.2 Informal Resolution:**

In cases where both parties consent, the CASH may opt for informal resolution methods, such as mediation or counseling. Both parties must agree to the terms of the resolution.

- **6.2.3 Formal Investigation:**

If informal resolution is not possible or if the allegations are serious, the committee will initiate a formal investigation:

- Investigating officers will gather evidence, including interviews with the complainant, respondent, and witnesses.
- The investigation will be confidential, and all parties will be encouraged to refrain from discussing the matter with others.

6.3 Investigation Procedure

- **6.3.1 Confidentiality:**

The investigation process will be conducted in a confidential manner to protect the identity and privacy of all parties involved. Both the complainant and respondent are expected to maintain confidentiality.

- **6.3.2 Witnesses:**

The committee may call witnesses to provide statements related to the incident. All witnesses will be informed about the importance of confidentiality.

- **6.3.3 Evidence Review:**

Any available evidence (messages, emails, recordings, etc.) will be reviewed carefully. Both parties have the right to present evidence during the investigation.

- **6.3.4 Report Submission:**

After a thorough investigation, the committee will submit a final report with its findings and recommendations. The report will be provided to the institution's management and both the complainant and respondent.

6.4 Resolution and Outcome

- **6.4.1 Actions and Penalties:**

If the allegation is upheld, the committee will recommend appropriate actions. The penalties may include:

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- **For the Respondent:** Warning, suspension, demotion, dismissal, or other disciplinary actions based on the severity of the incident.
- **For the Institution:** Introduction or revision of policies, awareness programs, or changes in operational procedures to prevent future occurrences.
- **6.4.2 Communication of Decision:**
Both the complainant and respondent will be informed of the committee's decision in writing. If the complainant is satisfied with the decision, the matter is considered closed. If not, they may appeal the decision as per the institution's appeal process.

6.5 Appeal Process

- If the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the decision, they can appeal to a higher authority, such as the Vice-Chancellor or the institution's governing body.
- The appeal must be filed within **15 working days** from receiving the final report or decision.

7. Confidentiality and Protection of Privacy

- All grievance proceedings are to be kept confidential. Disclosure of information may only occur on a need-to-know basis.
- Both the complainant and respondent will be protected from retaliation or victimization for lodging a complaint or participating in the investigation.

8. Awareness and Training

- Regular workshops and training on gender sensitivity, sexual harassment prevention, and rights will be conducted for students, faculty, and staff.
- The CASH will organize awareness campaigns to educate the institution community on the importance of maintaining a harassment-free environment.

9. Documentation and Record-Keeping

- The CASH will maintain detailed records of all complaints, investigations, and actions taken.
- Records will be stored securely and confidentially, with access restricted to authorized personnel only.

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10. Monitoring and Review

- The institution will periodically review and update this SOP to ensure that it remains compliant with legal standards and best practices.
- Regular reports will be submitted to the institution's governing body regarding the implementation and outcomes of the grievance redressal process.



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