



Avinashilingam

Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women

University

(Estd. u/s 3 of UGC Act 1956)

Coimbatore - 641 043, Tamil Nadu, India

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Mar 2015 to
Feb 2018

The Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) which envisages this university as a space where education can transform attitudes, perceptions and practices to nurture both equality and freedom for all sections, particularly women, has framed its own Sexual Harassment Policy in line with the recommendations of UGC Task Force, the directives of the Supreme Court and the National Commission for Women, which provide measures for ensuring the safety of women and programmes for gender sensitization on campuses. The Policy will be applicable to all the students and staff, and non-teaching employees working in the University.

Preventing & Managing Sexual Harassment

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY 2015



Avinashilingam

Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women

University

(Estd. u/s 3 of UGC Act 1956)

Coimbatore - 641 043, Tamil Nadu, India

(Deemed University under Category 'A' by MHRD)

Re-accredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC



Contents

FOREWORD	4
INTRODUCTION	6
UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT	9
THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY OF THE UNIVERSITY	10
THE COMPLAINTS MECHANISM AND THE SCOPE OF ITS FUNCTIONS.....	14
COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE.....	16
PROCEDURE FOR REGISTERING COMPLAINTS.....	19
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT	23
REFERENCES.....	24
ANNEXURE I: Internal Complaint Committee (ICC).....	25
ANNEXURE II-A: Local Complaint Committee (campus 1)	26
ANNEXURE II-B: Local Complaint Committee (campus 2)	27



FOREWORD

Under the Human Rights Code, sexual harassment is a form of unlawful gender (sex) discrimination. It may involve harassment by either a person of the same gender or other gender including transgender. The “Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013” makes sexual harassment unlawful. In the university context, sexual harassment jeopardizes the rights of staff, students and faculty.

The Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment for all students, faculty, and staff that is fair, humane, and responsible - an environment that supports career and educational advancement on the basis of job and academic performance. The University protects the freedom of staff and students to engage in critical thinking, writing, speech and research. Sexual harassment is against the mission of the University and is not tolerated. We therefore have a ‘Sexual Harassment Policy’.

The University policy which is based on the “Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013”, the Vishaka guidelines and the guidelines provided by the National Commission for Women; provides a definition of unacceptable conduct; a procedure for making formal complaints; and a range of remedial and disciplinary measures, up to and including expulsion or dismissal.

This policy applies to all members of the University community - faculty, staff, and students and will extend to all public spheres that remain in contact with members of the University community. This policy also prohibits sexual harassment by third parties towards members of the University community. The University also prohibits retaliation against persons who complain about alleged sexual harassment or who cooperate in an investigation of reported sexual harassment.

All members of the university will be informed about the requirements of the policy; to prevent harassment in the working or learning environment; to intervene and stop harassing conduct if it occurs; and to refer concerns to the Internal Complaints Committee.

I hope that this policy and the gender sensitization efforts in the campus will go a long way in ensuring the safety of everyone, on both our university campuses, and create a zero sexual harassment environment. I place on record my appreciation of the Women’s Studies Centre for developing the Sexual Harassment Policy.

Dr. Sheela Ramachandran

Vice Chancellor,

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women,



SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

PURPOSE: To establish uniform guidelines to promote a work and educational environment at Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education (Deemed University) that is free of discrimination and harassment and to provide a safe environment that fosters University compliance with the Supreme Court and state laws pertaining to sexual harassment.

PREPARED: by Women's Studies Centre, 2015

APPLICABILITY: This policy applies to faculty, staff and students.



INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based on sex. It is a structure of violence in everyday life. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written or transmissions by phone, fax, video, internet and e-mail, and will vary in the degree and extent to which it causes insult and distress. Sexual harassment is conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome. It involves behavior that can make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Both males, females and transgender can be subjected to sexual harassment from either person of the same or other gender. Since sexual harassment is the expression of male power over women that sustain patriarchal relations in our male dominant society, women are the worst affected.

Working women commonly face the situation of sexual harassment which creates an atmosphere of risk and fear. Studies have found out that sexual harassment is still prevalent and present in all institutions, organizations, government departments and private and corporate sector.

Sexual harassment at work can have very serious consequences both for the harassed individual as well as for other working women who experience it secondhand. The consequences to the individual can be serious, for example, a harassed woman may lose her job or the chance for a promotion if she refuses to give in to the sexual demands of someone in authority. In other situations, the unwelcome sexual conduct of co-workers makes the working conditions unfriendly and unpleasant- putting indirect pressure on her to leave the job. Sometimes, the employee is so traumatized by the harassment that she suffers serious emotional and physical consequences and very often, becomes unable to perform her job properly.

Sexually harassed women suffer from some unbearable stress reaction, including anxiety, depression, headaches, sleep disorders, weight loss or gain, nausea, lowered self-esteem and sexual dysfunction. Sexual harassment has a rising, demoralizing effect that discourages women



from asserting themselves within the workplace, while among men it emphasizes stereotypes of women employees as sex objects. Both men and women in a workplace can find their work disrupted by sexual harassment even if they are not directly involved.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, in 2012, 25,000 rape cases were reported across India. Out of these, 24,470 were committed by a relative or a neighbor. The data clearly shows that sexual harassment is not only taking place in workplace but also within the family, with neighbors or with friends.

Sexual harassment has been recognized globally as most threatening and most violating form of violence. Elimination of gender inequality is one of the basic planks of any Human Rights Platform. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill on rights for women. Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. CEDAW was ratified on the 25th June, 1993 by the Government of India.

The Indian Government had always considered sexual harassment as a violation of the fundamental rights of a woman. On 26 January 1950, when the Constitution of India became the law for all the states and territories of India, sexual harassment became a violation of the fundamental rights of a woman to equality under articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India and her right to life and to live with dignity under article 21 of the Constitution and right to practice any profession or to take up any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe environment free from sexual harassment. Pre-1997 the person facing sexual harassment at workplace had to lodge a complaint under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 that deals with the 'criminal assault of woman to outrage woman's modesty', and Section 509 that punishes an individual/individuals for using a 'word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman. In 1997, the Supreme Court passed a landmark judgment in the Vishaka case, laying down guidelines to be followed by establishments in dealing with complaints about



sexual harassment. The court stated that these guidelines were to be implemented until legislation is passed to deal with the issue. Vishaka guidelines apply to all women whether working part time, on contract or in voluntary/honorary capacity. The guidelines provide a broad framework which places a lot of emphasis on prevention and within which all appropriate preventive measures can be adapted.

Most recently, we have the “Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013” which is a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work. The Act came into force from 9 December 2013. The Act uses a definition of sexual harassment which was laid down by the Supreme Court of India in Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997). The case ruling establishes that sexual harassment violates a woman's rights in the workplace and is thus not just a matter of personal injury. The Act defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.

Major Features of the Act:

The definition of “aggrieved woman”, who will get protection under the Act is extremely wide to cover all women, irrespective of her age or employment status, whether in the organized or unorganized sectors, public or private and covers clients, customers and domestic workers as well.

While the “workplace” in the Vishaka Guidelines is confined to the traditional office set-up where there is a clear employer-employee relationship, the Act goes much further to include organizations, department, office, branch unit etc. in the public and private sector, organized and unorganized, hospitals, nursing homes, educational institutions, sports institutes, stadiums, sports complex and any place visited by the employee during the course of employment including the transportation.

Every employer 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 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 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 license or registration to conduct business.

The UGC is committed to a policy of zero tolerance regarding harassment of any kind. It set up a Task Force to Review the Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women on Campuses and Programmes for Gender Sensitization. The Report of the Task Force (Saksham) is expected to generate the much needed follow up action on campuses to ensure safety, gender sensitization and zero tolerance for harassment and gender based violence in the landscape of Higher Education in the country. The recommendations are based on the principles of Equality and Justice guaranteed by our Constitution and draw on the Rights to Dignity, Bodily Autonomy and Integrity, enunciated in the Bill of Rights for Women in the Justice Verma Committee Report of January 2013.

UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT

The Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) is committed to ensure an environment in which education, work, research and discussions are not corrupted by sexual harassment. It envisages a space where education can transform attitudes, perceptions and practices to nurture both equality and freedom for all sections, particularly women. The university is also committed to promote an "environment" that is conducive to the professional growth of its students and staff and encourages equality of opportunity. It ensures that every student, teaching and non-teaching staff is treated with dignity and respect and afforded equitable treatment.



The university has therefore framed its own Sexual Harassment Policy in line with the recommendations of UGC Task Force and the National Commission for Women, which provide measures for ensuring the safety of women and programmes for gender sensitization on campuses. The university will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment and is committed to take all necessary steps to ensure that its students and staff are not subjected to any form of harassment.

The interpretation of the term, “environment,” for the purpose of the policy for the Avinashilingam University, will extend to all public spheres that remain in contact with members of the University community. Such public spaces include not just the physical premises under the supervision of the University system, but even areas in and outside, where University members reside or travel to as part of their work as members of the University. The jurisdiction will include fieldtrips, sports tournaments, conferences, festivals and all other activities undertaken by any person as a member of the Avinashilingam University. The placement coordinator will be responsible for contact details of the nodal person in the organizations where female students are being placed for internship. Where students on their own apply for placement, they would be required to give the details of the place of internship to the university so that in the circumstance of any student being a victim of sexual harassment, the university can act swiftly. The Policy will be applicable to all the students and staff, and non-teaching employees working in the University.

THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY OF THE UNIVERSITY

The policy includes all forms of gender violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination on the basis of sex/gender. This policy defines sexual harassment and the mechanisms of redressal by looking at the specific structures, needs and imperatives in the University. It is guided by the “Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act,



2013". The policy on sexual harassment includes two parts. Part I Quid Pro Quo (sexual harassment) and Part II (sex based discrimination) which deals with a Hostile Work Environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

Sexual Harassment policy of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women has been framed keeping the following objectives in view:

- To fulfill the directive of the Supreme Court and the recommendations of the Task Force of the UGC.
- To uphold the commitment of the Avinashilingam University, to provide an environment free of gender-based discrimination.
- To promote a social and psychological environment, which will raise awareness about sexual harassment in its various forms.
- To create a working environment, which is free from sexual harassment and where all the students, interns, volunteers and members of staff are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- To evolve a permanent mechanism for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment cases and other acts of gender based violence.
- To ensure the implementation of the policy in letter and spirit and provide an effective procedure for complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness.
- To encourage the reporting of behavior, which violates the sexual harassment policy.
- To promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times.
- Treat all complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner.
- To generate public opinion against sexual harassment and all forms of gender based violence and the consequences they can expect if the policy is breached.

Part I: Policy Concerning Sexual Harassment Includes

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demand for sexual favours, either explicitly or implicitly, in return for employment, promotion, examination or evaluation of a person;
- Unwelcome sexual advances involving verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct such as sexually coloured remarks, jokes, letters, phone calls, e-mail, gestures, showing of pornography, lurid stares, physical contact or molestation, stalking,



sounds, display of pictures, signs, verbal or non-verbal communication which offends the individuals sensibilities and affect her/his performance;

- Eve teasing and taunts, physical confinement against one's will and likely to intrude upon one's privacy;
- Act or conduct by a person in authority which creates the environment at workplace hostile or intimidating to a person belonging to the other sex;
- Unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, demeaning, degrading, hostile, or otherwise seriously offensive working environment;
- Comments about a person's sex life or physical appearance including dress or gait;
- Unnecessary physical intimacy such as brushing up against a person;
- Physical contact such as touching or fondling for example girl students being comforted through touching by their male relatives, friend's father etc.;
- Sexual proposals or repeated unwanted requests for dates;
- Making promises or threats in return for sexual favors;
- Indecent assault or rape (which is also criminal offences).

Part II: Policy on Sex-Based Harassment by Discriminatory Conduct Includes

- Discrimination of any member of the university, on the basis of gender or sexual orientation, which interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, demeaning, degrading, hostile, or otherwise seriously offensive working or educational environment at university;
- Defacing or intentionally or recklessly damaging university property or the property of any other member of the university with the purpose of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or of creating an intimidating, demeaning, degrading, hostile, or otherwise seriously offensive working or educational environment at the university;
- Engaging in any conduct, speech, or combination of conduct and speech that would be viewed by a reasonable person as physically intimidating under the circumstances and that has the purpose of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or of creating an intimidating, demeaning, degrading, hostile, or otherwise seriously offensive working or educational environment at the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women.

What Sexual Harassment is not?

Sexual behavior is not behavior which is based on



- mutual attraction
- friendship and respect
- If the interaction is consensual, welcome and reciprocated it is not sexual harassment.

Jurisdiction

The rules and regulations outlined in this policy shall be applicable to all complaints of sexual harassment made:

- By a member of the university against any other member of the university irrespective of whether the harassment is alleged to have taken place within or outside the campus.
- By a member of outside agency against student interns.
- By a resident against a member of the university or made by a member against a resident irrespective of whether sexual harassment is alleged to have taken place within or outside the campus.
- By an outsider against a member of the university or by a member of the university against an outsider if the sexual harassment is alleged to have taken place within the campus.
- By a member of the university against an outsider if the sexual harassment is alleged to have taken place outside the campus. In such cases the Committee shall recommend that the University authorities initiate action by making a complaint with the appropriate authority. Further the committee will actively assist and provide available resources to the complainant in pursuing the complaint.

The policy will apply to:

All members of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University), includes students, teachers and non-teaching staff of the University (campus 1 and 2).

Students include regular students as well as hostel students of the University.

Teachers includes any person of the staff of the University or any institutions affiliated to it, who is appointed to a teaching and/or research post, whether full time, temporary,



part-time, visiting, honorary, or on special duty or deputation and shall include employees employed on a casual or project basis.

Non-Teaching Staff includes any person of the University who is not included in the category of a teacher. It shall also include staff at management level, project staff, contract workers and daily wagers.

Resident shall mean any person in the university who is a temporary or permanent resident of any of the accommodations or premises allotted to an employee or student.

Outsider includes any person who is not a member of the university or a resident or any person of an organization where female students are being placed for internship.

Campus shall mean the campus 1 and 2 of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women. Campus will include all places of work, teaching & training and residences including hostels.

THE COMPLAINTS MECHANISM AND THE SCOPE OF ITS FUNCTIONS

Duties of the University Authorities

It will be the legal responsibility of the Head of the Institution to provide a safe environment for women free from sexual harassment and discrimination at workplace and campus; and to ensure that the atmosphere in the institution is in no way offensive to women.

- An Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is constituted and their names and information about the redressal mechanism that has been put in place will also be made known to everyone.
- Encourage people to file their grievances.
- Sensitize the staff and students at regular intervals through conducting workshops and training programs, staff assembly, student assembly, non-teaching meeting, monthly meetings, etc.
- Display notices, posters in various places in the establishment spreading awareness about the issue of “Sexual Harassment” about the dehumanizing and demoralizing effects of sexual harassment on women, prohibition of sexual harassment in the campus.



- Display on the notice boards of various departments, offices, student hostels and other vulnerable areas, information on what constitutes sexual harassment, whom they can turn to, for information, help and guidance, and whom they can turn to for placing a complaint of sexual harassment and giving information of the first person whom the complaint of sexual harassment can be made.
- Circulate the policy of sexual harassment to all students and employees of the University campus in the form of pamphlets/ handouts etc.
- Take immediate action if any case of sexual harassment is noticed or reported by any staff/student of the University.
- Maintain confidentiality.

Students and Employees Initiative for Preventing Sexual Harassment

Most women themselves fail to recognize sexual harassment and treat it as unimportant and routine. Ignoring offensive behavior or denying its existence is the most common way women deal with sexual harassment.

- Make honest, direct statements. Speak the truth. Be serious, straightforward and frank about any incident of sexual harassment.
- Hold the harasser accountable for the actions. Don't protect the offender; don't pretend it didn't really happen. Take charge of the encounter and let people know what happened.
- Make it clear that all women have the right to be free from sexual harassment. Objecting to harassment is a matter of principle.
- Stick to your own agenda. Don't respond to the harasser's excuses or diversionary tactics.
- Reinforce your statements with strong, self-respecting body language: eye contact, head up, shoulders back, a strong, serious stance. Don't smile. Timid, submissive body language will undermine your message.
- Respond at the appropriate level. Use a combined verbal and physical response to physical harassment.
- End the interaction on your own terms, with a strong closing statement: 'Stop harassing women'.



Third - party Harassment

Where sexual harassment occurs as a result of an act or omission by any third party or outsider, the employer and person in-charge will take all the steps necessary and reasonable to assist the affected person in terms of support and preventive action.

COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

Sexual Harassment Complaints committee is a part of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women University and is constituted for redressal of complaints of sexual harassment. It is in accordance with the sexual harassment Act of 2013, every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee Act (ICC).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES

The policy has abided by the following principles:

1. In order to create autonomous institutional structures to look into complaints of sexual harassment, members from outside the institution with a known contribution to gender issues have been included in the Committee.
2. To make the Committees representative, each category of University members is given representation in the Committee.
3. As per the sexual harassment Act of 2013, it is mandatory for each committee to have a woman chairperson as well as at least 50 per cent women members.
4. In order to decentralize the complaints procedure and provide easy access to all, separate cells have been provided for both the campuses under the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women.
5. In order to make the complaints committees accountable and democratic, a combination of nominations and elected student representatives are used to constitute every committee.

STRUCTURE OF COMPLAINTS COMMITTEES

The Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for women has 2 campuses, Campus 1 and Campus 2. There will be 2 local complaints committees, one in campus 1 and another in campus 2. The complaints received from the local committees will be



sent to the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC). The committee receives legal advice through one member who is an advocate.

Status

The Internal Complaints Committees shall have statutory status and be empowered to carry out the mandate of the policy.

Power and duties of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)

Preventive role

- Create and ensure a safe environment that is free of sexual harassment.
- Create an atmosphere promoting equality and gender justice.
- Publicize the policy in Tamil and English widely, especially through prospectuses, notice boards etc.
- Publicize in English and in Tamil the names and phone numbers of members of the committees.
- Plan and carry out programmes for gender sensitization with the assistance of the Women Studies Centre.

Remedial

- Create a mechanism for registering complaints which is safe, accessible and sensitive.
- Take cognizance of complaints about sexual harassment, conduct enquiries, provide assistance and redressal to the victims, recommend penalties and take action against the harasser, if necessary.
- Recommend to the concerned authorities follow-up action and monitor the same.
- Advise the disciplinary authority concerned to issue warnings or take the help of the law to stop the harasser, if the complainant consents.
- Seek medical, police and legal intervention with the consent of the complainant.
- Make arrangements for appropriate psychological, emotional and physical support (in the form of counseling, security and other assistance) to the victim if s/he so desires.

Composition of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)

The Internal Complaints Committee shall consist of the following members to be nominated by the employer, namely:—



- a) Chairperson who shall be a woman.
- b) Not less than two members from amongst employees preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge;
- c) One member from amongst non-governmental organizations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment: Provided that at least one-half of the total members so nominated shall be women.
- d) The Presiding Officer and every Member of the Internal Committee shall hold office for such period, not exceeding three years, from the date of their nomination as may be specified by the employer.
- e) The Member appointed from among the non-governmental organizations or associations may be paid such fees or allowances for holding the proceedings of the Internal Committee, by the employer, as may be prescribed

The constitution of the proposed ICC is at Annexure 1. The Committee could work closely with the Women's Studies Centre of the University. If necessary, assistance may be sought from the Deans, Deans of Students' Welfare, Warden of the hostels and other similar persons in authority. They should establish networks with legal experts, legal aid centres, counseling centres, health centres, police stations, Crimes against Women cells, women's groups in the city and other organizations such as the National/State Commission for Women and National/State Human Rights Commission.

THE LOCAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEES IN CAMPUS 1 & 2

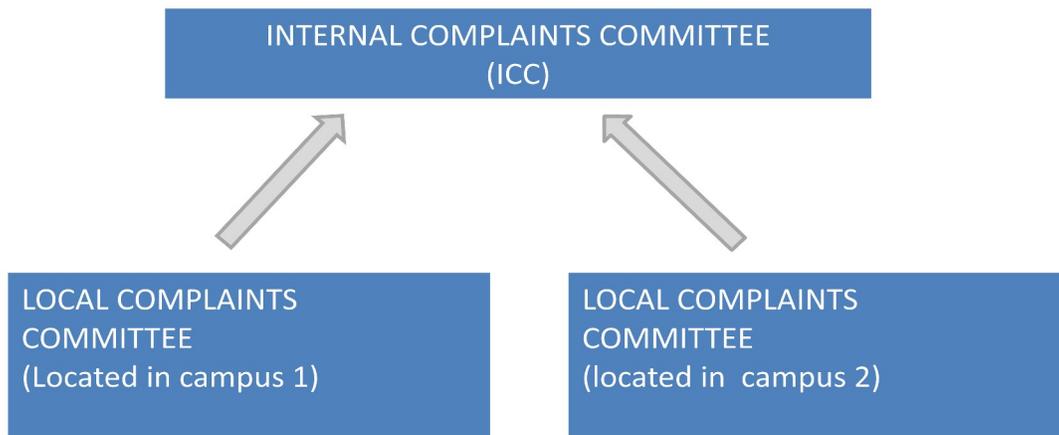
Composition of the local complaints committee

The constitution of the proposed local complaints committee is at Annexure 2.

- a) Two teacher representative to be nominated.
- b) Two non-teaching Staff representatives (of which one must be from Group D) to be nominated.
- c) Three elected student representatives to be elected. At least one of the three representatives should be a post-graduate student.
- d) Two persons with a known contribution to women's issues, to be co-opted by the Committee from outside the Unit. One of these may preferably have a legal background.
- e) The Chairperson (woman) to be elected from amongst the members.
- f) The Member Secretary to be elected from amongst the members.



At least 50 percent of the members in each of these categories should be women. The term of each member (other than students) shall be two years. The previous Committee will continue till the new Committee is constituted. The University should ensure that the new Committee is constituted latest by 20th September every year. Complaints can be given to any member of the Committee. It will be incumbent on the head of any department/administrative unit or any teacher to forward a complaint s/ received to the committee immediately.



PROCEDURE FOR REGISTERING COMPLAINTS

As soon as the complaint is received, the same shall be sent to the committee within three days and the committee should initiate the process of inquiry within a week of the date of receipt of the complaint by the committee. The report of the Committee shall be placed before the Chairperson.

- All complaints must be brought by the complainant in person. The exception for this will be in cases of forced confinement of the person. In a case, where the complaint is brought by another person on behalf of the complainant, the committee will examine whether an investigation, intervention or some other assistance is needed. In exceptional cases, third party/witness complaints may be entertained. In such cases, the committee will ascertain whether the person alleged to have been harassed wishes to lodge a formal complaint. Once such a complaint is received the committee shall proceed to investigate it as per the procedure specified.
- Corroborative material with a documentary proof, oral or written material, etc., to substantiate the complaint.
- If the complainant wishes s/he can be accompanied by a representative.
- The Vice-Chancellor can refer any complaint to ICC
- A complainant can go directly to the ICC.



Recording a complaint

Complaints can be made verbally, through e-mail, or in a letter to any member of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC). Complaints can be made by the person facing harassment or even by a third party.

Enquiry Procedures

- All complaints made to any committee member of the local complaints committee must be received and recorded by the member, who shall then inform the Member Secretary of the ICC about the complaint, who in turn shall call a meeting of the committee of the ICC.
- All meetings of the committee will be called by the Member Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson and a notice of at least 3 to 5 working days must be given.
- The person against whom complaint is made may be called for a deposition before the Committee and an opportunity will be given to him/ her to give an explanation, where after, an “Enquiry” shall be conducted and concluded.
- The committee is bound to maintain confidentiality during the time of the enquiry (in order not to prejudice the proceedings).
- After the report has been finalized, confidentiality should be maintained, if the complainant so desires, by withholding the complainant’s name and other particulars that would identify her. (Revealing the identity either in exceptional cases such as stalking may put the complainant at greater risk or as a result of social prejudices the complainant may face additional adverse effects as a result of public circulation of the finished report).
- During an enquiry the quorum for all committee meetings will be one-third of the total membership, and must include at least one member from the complainant’s category as well as, one of the two members co-opted from outside.
- The ICC will, within ten days of the receipt of a complaint, establish a prima facie case of sexual harassment on the basis of both the definition of sexual harassment as given in this policy, and the jurisdiction of this policy. Reasons for not pursuing a complaint must be recorded in the minutes and made available to the complainant in writing.
- In case of a complaint filed by another person on behalf of the complainant (where the complainant is in confinement) the complaint will be investigated in order to explore whether a prima facie case of sexual harassment exists and whether intervention or some other assistance is required.
- In case a prima facie case is established the ICC shall set up an enquiry committee of 3-5 members, with at least one member of the complainant’s category, as well as a member from outside the University.



- The sub-committee must inform the accused in writing about the charges made against him/her and s/he should be given a period of five days from the date of receipt of the notification to respond to the charges.
- During the enquiry procedure, the complainant and the accused will be called separately so as to ensure freedom of expression and an atmosphere free of intimidation. The complainant will be allowed to be accompanied by one representative during the enquiry.
- The sub-committee must submit its report to the larger committee not later than 15 working days. The larger committee will discuss the report and make recommendations for punitive action if required.
- The entire process of enquiry should be completed within one month.
- In the event, the complaint does not fall under the purview of Sexual Harassment or the complaint does not mean an offence of Sexual Harassment, the same would be dropped after recording the reasons thereof.
- In case the complaint is found to be false, the Complainant shall, if deemed fit, be liable for appropriate disciplinary action by the Management.

Safeguards to protect the complainant

All complaints will be handled with equal seriousness irrespective of the positions held by the persons involved. In view of the complicated nature of sexual harassment, complaints will be considered even when it is difficult or impossible to provide concrete evidence. The guiding principles are:

- Confidentiality: The local committees and the ICC guarantees anonymity of complainants and all persons involved.
- Non-coercion and Interim Relief

Disciplinary Action

- Employees who fail to comply with the provisions of the Act will be punishable with a fine which may extend to Rs. 50,000.
- Upon receipt of the Enquiry Report the disciplinary authority will promptly act on the Enquiry Report. If the disciplinary authority disagrees with or wishes to modify the recommendations made by the Committee against Sexual Harassment it may do so by



recording the reasons in writing. The same shall also be communicated in writing to the concerned Committee against Sexual Harassment.

- A copy of the Enquiry Report shall be given by the disciplinary authority to the complainant and the defendant.
- The disciplinary authority shall however take disciplinary action only after giving the defendant an opportunity to reply to the findings of the Committee against Sexual Harassment through an oral or written representation in accordance with the service rules and principles of natural justice.
- The disciplinary authority shall take disciplinary action within 1 month of receipt of the Report from the Committee against Sexual Harassment.
- The Committee shall be governed by such rules as may be framed by the Supreme Court orders or any other legislation enacted later on.
- No person accused of an act of Sexual Harassment under this policy shall be part of the decision making process referred to this section. The disciplinary action could be in the form of:
 - Warning
 - Written apology
 - Bond of good behavior
 - Adverse remarks in the Confidential Report
 - Suspension
 - Dismissal

Redressal

- The ICC can ask the University to suspend the alleged harasser from administrative post/classes if his/her presence is likely to interfere with the enquiry.
- The victim of sexual harassment as per the Supreme Court judgment will have the option to seek transfer of the perpetrator or their own transfer where applicable.



- The Head of the institution upon receipt of the enquiry report shall refer the same to the Governing Body/ Executive Council (EC) and institute disciplinary action on the basis of the recommendations of the Internal Complaint Committee under relevant service rules.
- The disciplinary action will be commensurate with the nature of the violation.

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT

The Complaints Committee will make an annual report to the University Grants Commission of the complaints and action taken by them.



REFERENCES

- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
- Supreme Court of India. 1997. Vishaka Guidelines were stipulated by the Supreme Court of India, in Vishaka & others Vs State of Rajasthan & other. Writ Pet (Criminal) No. 660-70 of 1992 [1997(7) SCC.323] Dt. 13.8.1997
- University Grants Commission (UGC), 2013. Saksham (Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programmes for Gender Sensitization on Campuses.
- National Commission for Women, 2014. Guidelines for various stakeholders involved with internship of female students, interns, volunteers.
- National Commission for Women, 2014. Report of the NCW Initiative on Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work Place.
- ILO, 2005. Conditions of Work and Employment Programme.
- United Nations, 1979. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly.



ANNEXURE I: Internal Complaint Committee (ICC)

S. No.	Name	Designation/affiliation	Gender (M/F)
1	Chairperson Dr. Vijayalakshmi Puroshothaman	Former Dean (CEED) Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women	F
2	Member Secretary Dr. Minnie Mathew	Director, Women's Studies Centre	F
	External Experts		
3	Dr. Vijayalakshmi Puroshothaman	Former Dean (CEED) Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women	F
4	Ms. N.V. Sreejaya	Advocate, Family Law Practitioner	F
5	Dr. Vinu Aram	Director, Shanti Ashram	F
	Teaching	Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women	
6	Dr.(Mrs) U. Jerinabi	Dean, Business Administration,	F
7	Dr. Vasantha Kalyani David	Professor, Dept. of Computer Science	F
8	Dr. C. G. Padmagowri	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Electrical and Electronics Engineering	F
9	Dr. N.S. Rohini	Dean, Student Affairs, Professor & HoD, Dept. of Psychology	F
	Non-Teaching		
10	Dr. C. Meena	Computer Manager & Head of the Computer Centre	F
11	Dr. Shanmugasundari	Superintendent	F
	Student Representatives		
12	Students Council Chairperson	Ms.Manimala.V, III B.Sc., Psychology	F
13	Students Council Co- Chairperson- 1	Ms.Poorvaja.B, IIIB.Com PA	F
14	Students Council Co- Chairperson-2	Ms.N.Hemalatha, III B.Sc., Special Education	F



ANNEXURE II-A: Local Complaint Committee (campus 1)

S. No.	Name	Designation/affiliation	Gender (M/F)
1	Chairperson Dr. Neelavathy	HoD, Dept. of Tamil, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women	F
2	Member Secretary Dr. S. Jaya,	Professor & HoD, Dept. of Human Development, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women	F
	Teaching Staff	Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women	
3	Dr. Neelavathy	HoD, Dept. of Tamil	F
4	Dr. S. Jaya	Professor & HoD, Dept. of Human Development	F
	Non-Teaching Staff		
5	Mr. T. Karthikeyan	Artist	M
6	Ms. P. Poongothai	Laboratory Assistant (Group C)	F
	Student Representatives		
7	Students Council Co-Chairperson 3	Ms.Priyanka G III BCA	F
8	Students Council Secretary	Ms.Manisha Halai, II BA Economics	F
9	Ms. Sivabharathi	II MSW	F
	Persons with a known contribution to women's issues		
10	Sr. Arputha Paul Rani (nun)	Secretary, Rhythm Social Services for Women, Coimbatore	F
11	Dr. Rupa Gunaseelan	Professor BSMED, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.	F
12	Mrs. Vennila Chandashekar	Advocate	F



ANNEXURE II-B: Local Complaint Committee (campus 2)

S. No.	Name	Designation/affiliation	Gender (M/F)
1	Chairperson Dr.S.Ananthalakshmi	HOD , Dept. of Science & Humanities Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women	F
2	Member Secretary Mrs.N.Nalina	Associate Professor , Dept. of Civil Engineering, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women	F
	Teaching Staff		
3	Dr.S.Ananthalakshmi	HOD , Dept. of Science & Humanities	F
4	Mrs.N.Nalina	Associate Professor , Dept of Civil Engineering	F
	Non-Teaching Staff		
5	Mrs.Yasodha	Junior Assistant (Office)	F
	Student Representatives		
6	Co-Chair person Student's Council (Engg.)	Ms.Jayashree M.M	F
7	Joint Secretary Student's Council (Engg.)	Ms.Elakkiya M	F
	Persons with a known contribution to women's issues		
8	Mrs. Godhanavalli	Students & Family Counsellor, Social activist, Coimbatore	F
9	Mrs. U Elizabeth	Women Development Worker, Good Shepherd Health Education Centre & Dispensary, Coimbatore	F
10	Ms.K.Subathra	Advocate, Coimbatore	F

