



## Koneru Lakshmalah Education Foundation

(Category -1, Deemed to be University estd. u/s. 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)

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### INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE/PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMMITTEE

#### 1. PREAMBLE

In light of the Supreme Court ruling and its associated guidelines aimed at promoting gender equality and preventing sexual harassment and abuse, especially within workplaces, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has consistently issued circulars since 1998. These circulars urge educational institutions to create permanent bodies and committees and develop protocols to tackle sexual harassment, violence against women, and ragging on campus. Moreover, the UGC promotes the creation of a supportive environment where women are valued and treated with compassion. In line with these instructions, the University has formed a Committee to address Sexual Harassment.

#### 2. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

"Sexual Harassment" encompasses any unwanted behavior of a sexual nature, whether explicit or implied, including physical contact, advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually suggestive remarks, displaying pornography, or any other unwelcome verbal, physical, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature. It extends to the following scenarios:

- (i) If unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature are employed, whether explicitly or implicitly, to influence decisions related to employment, academic performance, involvement in extracurricular activities, or access to services or opportunities at the University.
- (ii) When an individual utilizes their body, any portion thereof, or any object as an extension of their body for sexual intentions towards another person without the latter's consent or against their will, it constitutes sexual assault.
- (iv) When derogatory comments, behavior, or conduct is based on a person's gender identity or sexual orientation, or when the University's classroom or other public forums are utilized to demean, discriminate against, or create a hostile environment based on a person's gender identity or sexual orientation.
- (v) Including but not limited to, eve-teasing, inappropriate remarks, jokes causing embarrassment, innuendos, taunts, sexist remarks, unwanted sexual overtones such as obscene telephone calls, unwanted touching, displaying offensive material, forcible physical contact, molestation, physical confinement against one's will, or any other action likely to violate one's privacy.

### **3. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE**

The Committee consists of the following members:

- (a) Chairperson/Convenor who shall be a women faculty member employed at a senior level (not below a Professor in case of University, and not below an Professor
- (b) Faculty members non-teaching employees preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge.
- (c) Students are selected to serve on the Internal Complaints Committee/Prevention of Sexual Harassment Committee according to their academic excellence and adherence to ethical standards. The names of students are recommended by the respective Heads of Departments, and the composition of the committee is ultimately determined by the Dean of Student Affairs, subject to approval by the Vice Chancellor.
- (d) One member from amongst non-government organizations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment.
- (e) Maximum period to resolve the grievance received is from 3 days to 15 days depending on the nature of the grievance.
- e) The Committee should meet quarterly in an year review the position and to resolve the problems or the committee meets immediately on the day of grievance received or within next two days of grievance received depending on the nature of grievance. The work relating to the implementation of the reservation policy may be monitored by the above stated Committee. The validity of the committee is 2 years.

### **4. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Committee are:

- 4.1** To prevent discrimination and sexual harassment against women, by promoting gender amity among students and employees.
- 4.2** To suggest modifications or enhancements to the regulations outlined in the student handbook and the institution's regulations, ensuring they are equitable and inclusive, and to establish procedures for preventing, addressing, resolving, and pursuing legal action against instances of discrimination and sexual harassment involving female students and staff members.
- 4.3** To address instances of discrimination and sexual harassment against women promptly, with the goal of providing support services to victims and putting an end to the harassment within a specified timeframe.
- 4.4** Recommend appropriate punitive action against the guilty party to the Vice-Chancellor.

## **5. POWERS & DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **5.1 Preventive:**

- (i) To create and ensure a safe environment that is free of sexual harassment.
- (ii) To create an atmosphere promoting quality and gender justice.
- (iii) To publicize the policy widely, especially through prospectuses, notice boards etc.
- (iv) To publicize the names and phone numbers of members of the Committees.
- v) To plan and carry out programs for gender sensitization.

### **5.2 Remedial:**

- (ii) To acknowledge complaints regarding sexual harassment, conduct investigations, offer support and resolution to the victims, suggest penalties, and, if necessary, take disciplinary action against the harasser.
- (iii) To propose necessary follow-up actions to the relevant authorities and oversee their implementation.
- (iv) To recommend that the appropriate disciplinary authority issue warnings following established procedures or seek legal assistance to stop the harasser, with the consent of the complainant.
- (v) To coordinate medical, police, and legal interventions with the consent of the complainant and approval from the relevant authority.
- (vi) To arrange suitable psychological, emotional, and physical support, such as counseling, security measures, and other assistance, for the victim if requested.

## **6. PROCEDURES FOR REGISTERING COMPLAINTS & ENQUIRY**

- 6.1** All complaints must be submitted to the Vice chancellor/Registrar/Dean Student Affairs/Chairperson/Convenor by the complainant in person in written form/ through email.
- 6.2** It will be incumbent on the part of Vice chancellor/Registrar/Dean Student Affairs/Convenor to forward the complaint received to the committee immediately.
- 6.3** If the complainant wishes she/he can be accompanied by a representative.
- 6.4** All complaints made must be received and recorded.
- 6.5** The committee is bound to maintain confidentiality during the time of the enquiry.
- 6.6** After the report has been finalized, confidentiality should be maintained, if the complainant so desires.
- 6.7** For all committee meetings, the quorum required will be one-third of the total membership, which must include at least one member representing the complainant's category and one of the two members nominated from outside the University.

**6.8** Within 15 days of receiving a complaint, the Committee will determine if there is sufficient evidence to establish a preliminary case of sexual harassment based on both the definition of sexual harassment and the Committee's jurisdiction. If the Committee decides not to pursue a complaint, the reasons for this decision will be documented in the minutes and provided to the complainant in written form.

**6.9** Throughout the investigation process, the complainant and the accused will be summoned separately to guarantee freedom of expression and an environment devoid of intimidation. The complainant will have the option to be accompanied by one representative during the investigation.

**6.10** The entire process of enquiry should be completed within one month.

**6.11** The report of the Committee in the case of staff of the University will be placed before the Board of Management (BoM) for taking a decision on the recommendations made.

**6.13** The report of the Committee pertaining to students will be dealt by the Disciplinary Committee for appropriate action.

**6.14** In the case of staff, the disciplinary action could be initiated duly following the procedures and in the light of Supreme Court Judgment and appropriate rules as prescribed by the Government of India in the reported cases of sexual harassment

**6.15** In the case of students, disciplinary action could be in the form as mentioned here under:

Warning

- Written apology
- Bond of good behavior
- Debarring entry into a hostel/ campus for a specific period
- Suspension for a specific period of time
- Withholding results
- Debarring from exams
- Expulsion
- Denial of further admission in the future
- Any other relevant punishment as deemed fit by the Disciplinary Committee.

## **7. ADDITIONAL PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED**

**7.1** Once a complaint has been given to the Committee, the complainant should not be made public till the enquiry is completed.

**7.2** Filing of a grievance/complaint against the staff shall not adversely affect their status/job, salary/promotion, grades etc.

**7.3** Any committee member charged with sexual harassment in a written complaint must step down as member during the enquiry.

**7.4** The committee should have names and easy access to groups and /or individuals who can assist by providing legal, medical and/or psychological help to the victims.

**7.5** In the case of third-party harassment/ outsider harassment, the university's authorities shall initiate action by making a complaint with the appropriate authority.

**7.6** Non-adversarial modes of redressal and resolution could also be considered in appropriate cases<sup>9</sup>eg., verbal warning, verbal apology, promise of good behavior etc.

**This policy is approved in 2EC conducted on 28-06-2024**



  
**REGISTRAR**  
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