

Policy against Sexual Harassment of Women at IIM Lucknow

Vision Statement

The Indian Institute of Management Lucknow is responsive to gender issues and is committed to uphold the values of gender inclusion and gender sensitivity. It will strive to promote gender equality in the Institute's campus, as well as the society at large, as envisioned by the Constitution of India.

Introduction

The "Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act", was passed by the Parliament in 2013. The guidelines clearly state that "It shall be the duty of the employer or other responsible persons in workplaces or other institutions to prevent or deter the commission of acts of sexual harassment and to provide the procedures for the resolutions, settlement, or prosecution of acts, of sexual harassment by taking all steps required."

Educational institutions also come under the gambit of this ACT and follow the Supreme Court directives for the same. The Indian Institute of Management Lucknow (IIM Lucknow) pursues a zero-tolerance approach towards Sexual Harassment at the Workplace and aims to:

- provide a regulatory mechanism to deal with unlawful harassment.
- set in place measures to deal with sexual harassment of women at the workplace.
- work towards gender sensitization among the faculty, staff, officers and students at the institute.
- ensure that such complaints would not invite retaliation.
- implement speedy redressal of complaints.

As mandated by the ACT, the **Internal Committee [IC]** is in place at IIM Lucknow to address the issue of Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the workplace. Members comprise the following:

- Prof. Sangeeta D. Misra (Faculty, Chair)
- Prof. Vijay Pal Singh (Faculty, Member)
- Prof. Anita Goyal (Faculty, Member, Noida Campus)
- Mr. Dheeraj Singh (Staff, Member)
- Ms. Ankita Kaushik (Staff, Member)
- Ms. Appoli Srivastava (External Member in line with 'Vishakha guidelines')

This body has been charged with the following responsibilities:

- to develop a policy related to Sexual Harassment at the Workplace.
- to evolve prevention and redressal mechanisms for speedy resolution of such cases.
- to ensure implementation and follow-up mechanisms.
- to impart periodic training to faculty, students, officers and staff on issues related to sexual harassment at the workplace to create a stress-free environment free of any discrimination.
- to publicize in English and Hindi the names and phone numbers of the helpline number.

- to report, to the competent authority, the steps taken to implement the act in the institution.

HELPLINE: +91-9453876146, Prof. Sangeeta D. Misra, Chair, Internal Committee - send email to icchair@iiml.ac.in / iccchair@iiml.ac.in with a copy to sdmisra@iiml.ac.in

What constitutes sexual harassment?

According to the ACT, sexual harassment includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) namely:

- Physical contact and advances; or
- A demand or request for sexual favours; or
- Making sexually coloured remarks; or
- Showing pornography; or
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct perceived to be of a sexual nature.

Unwelcome acts or behaviour includes any of the following:

- unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours.
- verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature made under a condition of teaching/guidance, employment, participation, or evaluation of a person's engagement in any activity.
- unwelcome sexual advances.
- loaded comments, sexual innuendos, off the cuff remarks, sexually coloured jokes, lewd emails, text, gestures, exhibition of pornography, lurid stares, physical contact, stalking, sounds or display of a derogatory nature.
- any form of intimidation, interference, or hostility.
- use of body/body part in a sexually objectionable manner, without consent.
- deprecatory comments to denigrate/discriminate against person(s).
- create a hostile environment based on a person's gender identity/sexual orientation.
- humiliating treatment that is likely to affect health and safety.

What does not construe sexual harassment?

Any teaching activity done with the express educational purpose of explaining fertility, sexuality, reproductive, health, and other research topics, in a scientific manner will not be considered as harassment.

Jurisdiction

- The policy applies to all students (full time, part-time, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral fellows, etc.), faculty (permanent, visiting, adjunct and contract, etc.), officers, administrative and academic staffs (both permanent and temporary, etc.) on active roll of IIM Lucknow.
- The policy and the rules & regulations would also apply to service providers, contract employees, and outsiders who may be within the physical area of IIM Lucknow at the time of commission of the act.

- The policy also applies to those persons engaged in official duty in off campus visits/meetings/workshops/field work conducted by the institute.

The IC is empowered to:

- Summon and enforce the attendance of any person (COMPLAINANT/ COMPLAINEE/ WITNESS) and examining him/her on OATH and recording the statements.
- Request the discovery and production of any documents necessary for conducting the inquiry.
- Organize gender sensitization programs; and/or,
- Any other means prescribed by the said ACT.

Complaint Procedure

STAGE 1

- The complainant (aggrieved woman) shall have the right to file a complaint regarding sexual harassment against another student /employee /faculty /administrative staff / research staff / any of the members of the Committee (the Complainee) within THREE months from the date of the incident (or within a period of 3 months from the date of last incident if there are a series of incidents).
- All complaints will only be accepted in writing. However, the Committee is allowed to take action even in the absence of a written complaint.
- The complaint must be signed by the complainant.
- The complainant will be accorded full secrecy during the process. No identity will be disclosed by the Committee to any other person.
- Where the aggrieved woman is unable to make a complaint on account of her physical or mental incapacity, a complaint may be filed by her relative or friend, her co-worker or a special educator or a qualified psychiatric or psychologist or by the guardian or authority under whose care she is receiving treatment.
- The committee, before initiating an inquiry, can suggest the option of conciliation to the complainant and the complainee so that the matter is resolved between the parties. This step may be taken only if the complainant is willing. The matter may be resolved by giving a warning and registering the same in the Complaint register.

In case the complainant is not open and willing for conciliation, or if the process of reconciliation fails, an inquiry shall be processed in accordance with the ACT, and the same has to be completed within a stipulated time of 90 days.

STAGE 2

- At the time of filing the complaint, the complainant shall submit to the internal committee (IC), a copy of the complaint, in writing, along with supporting documents and the names, addresses and email ids of her witnesses.
- On receipt of the complaint, the IC shall send a copy of the same to the respondent within a period of 7 working days.
- On receipt of the complaint, the respondent shall submit his reply to the complaint along with his list of documents and names, addresses and email ids of his witnesses within a period of 10 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint.

- the IC shall make inquiry into the complaint in accordance with the principle of natural justice. As part of the inquiry process, the IC shall start the process of an oral hearing, where the complainant, the accused, and their witnesses will separately be given a chance to give an account of the instances alluded to in the complaint.
- The IC shall be empowered to ask questions that it deems fit to all parties during the oral hearing.
- The IC is empowered to disqualify questions that it deems to be irrelevant, mischievous, or gender insensitive.
- Additional witnesses may be produced to substantiate the claims made by the parties.
- The IC is empowered to ask for official documents relevant to the investigation.
- The IC is required to provide reasonable opportunity to both the complainant and the complainee to present their case.
- The complainant and the complainee may not be placed face to face at any time during the proceedings.
- The IC can take a decision in case of the absence of the complainee or the complainant for three consecutive hearings conducted during the proceedings. However, any such decision may not be taken without giving a notice, in writing, 15 days in advance, to the party concerned.
- Lawyers are not allowed during the inquiry but both sides can avail help from them.

Note:

- In many sexual harassment cases no eyewitnesses may necessarily exist. The IC will rely on the oral testimonies, other circumstantial evidence, written evidence, or proof produced in the inquiry/probe.
- ‘Proof beyond reasonable doubt’, is enough to take a decision on the complaint.

Complaint Withdrawal

- The complaint may be withdrawn by the complainant at any time during the proceedings.
- The IC is required to ascertain the reasons of the withdrawal.
- Sign and countersign must be done by the complainant and the same must be recorded in writing.
- The inquiry will be terminated unless the IC feels that the withdrawal is due to coercion or harassment.
- In case the complaint is not proved, the Committee shall recommend that no action is required to be taken in the matter. Mere inability to substantiate a complaint or provide adequate proof need not attract action against the complainant.
- In such cases that are likely to be rare, where the Committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation by the complainant is malicious or false with the full knowledge of the complainant or where the complainant has produced any forged or misleading document, the Committee may recommend punitive action against the complainant.
- If the Committee arrives at a conclusion that during the inquiry any witness has given false evidence or produced any forged or misleading document, it may recommend punitive action against the said witness.
- If complaint is not proved, then it does not mean that the complainant’s intention was false or malicious.

STAGE 3

Disciplinary Actions

The nature of the disciplinary action will depend on the nature of the offence:

A. Where the Committee finds an employee (faculty, staff or research staff) of the Institute involved in sexual harassment of the complainant, it can recommend disciplinary action in the form of:

- Warning
- Written apology
- Bond of good behaviour
- Undergoing a counselling session
- Adverse remarks in the Service book
- Debarring from teaching duties or duties as a guide or examiner or as a resource person
- Denial of membership of statutory bodies
- Denial of re-employment or renewal of contract
- Stopping of increments/promotion
- Reverting, demotion
- Suspension
- Dismissal
- Any other relevant mechanism

B. Where the Committee finds a research scholar/student of the institute is involved in sexual harassment of the complainant, it can recommend disciplinary action in the form of:

- Warning
- Written apology
- Bond of good behaviour
- Undergoing a counselling session
- Debarring entry into the hostel/mess/guest house/campus
- Suspension for a specific time period
- Withholding results
- Debarring from exams
- Stopping of fellowship and contingency grant
- Expulsion
- Denial of admission
- Declaring the harasser as "persona non grata" for a stipulated period of time
- Community service
- Any other relevant mechanism

C. In such cases where the Committee finds a third party/outsider to be guilty of sexual harassment, the Director can recommend an appropriate disciplinary action.

NOTE: Action will be taken against person(s) who try to pressurise the complainant in any way. and also, on those who attempt to intimidate the members of the committee.

STAGE 4

Redressal

1. The Committee will submit a report along with recommended disciplinary actions to the Director within a period of 10 days from the date of completion of the inquiry.
2. The Director, upon receipt of the inquiry report, shall take disciplinary action within 60 days, taking into cognizance the recommendations of the Committee.
3. The disciplinary action would be commensurate with the nature of the violation.

4. Non-adversarial modes of redressal and resolution could also be considered in appropriate cases. Examples of this may be verbal warning, verbal apology, promise of good behaviour etc.
5. The victim of sexual harassment/complainant will have the option to seek adjustments such as change of the room/location of the office room, change of the quarter, etc.
6. The Committee, in exceptional cases, can ask the institute to allow the complainant to proceed on leave for a period of up to three months (the leave may not be deducted from his/her leave account).
7. Grant such other relief to the complainant as may be prescribed.

Amendments to the Policy

1. The policy will be suitably amended as per modifications in the prevailing Act/laws.
2. The committee may amend the policy from time to time.