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Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

1 message

Saleem Ullah Sohoo <ssohoo@hec.gov.pk>

Thu, Jul 27, 2023 at 8:10 PM

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Respected Sir/Madam,

Higher Education Institutions are highly consequential institutions in society that are dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Members of the HEI community have several important rights and privileges, central among which is the right to pursue inquiry and search for knowledge without hinderance from unlawful or otherwise unacceptable constraints.

Protection against sexual harassment is important not only because it threatens the freedom and conduciveness of the environment at institutions of higher learning. At a more fundamental level, such conduct is unacceptable because it violates personal dignity and shall not be tolerated at HEIs in Pakistan under any circumstance. For this purpose, HEC has implemented Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

This policy has been made pursuant to the powers granted to the HEC under the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002, and is binding on all higher education institutions in the country. In accordance with the terms of this policy, sexual harassment shall be prohibited at HEIs in Pakistan, and shall constitute a punishable offence under the policy. The HEC affirms the right of every member of the HEI community live, study and work in an environment that is free from sexual harassment. The goal of this policy is to prevent sexual harassment from taking place, and where necessary to act upon complaints of sexual harassment promptly, fairly, judiciously and with due regard to confidentiality for all parties concerned. For the implementation of the policy HEI is requested to take action as per policy. Actions to be taken by the HEI is attached.

It is requested to share implementation report & copies of notification (including contact details) till 11th August 2023. Please share a report through email to Mr.Shafique Abbas, Superintendent (shabbas@hec.gov.pk)

Engr. SALEEMULLAH Soho

The Registrars

All Public and Private Sector Universities

Copy for information to:

- i. ES to Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- ii. PS to Director General (R&AA), Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- iii. In charge, HEC Regional Centers (Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta)

2 attachments

 **1.Letter-HEC-Ibd-Protection Against Sexual Harassement.pdf**
420K

 **2.Actions to be Taken by the University.pdf**
70K



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HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Government of Pakistan, Islamabad

office of the
DIRECTOR
Research & Analysis Activities

Sector H-9
Islamabad, Pakistan
www.hec.gov.pk

F.No.1-2/PSH/R&AA/DIR/433/2023

27th July 2023

Subject : Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

Respected Sir/Madam,

Higher Education Institutions are highly consequential institutions in society that are dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Members of the HEI community have several important rights and privileges, central among which is the right to pursue inquiry and search for knowledge without hinderance from unlawful or otherwise unacceptable constraints.

Protection against sexual harassment is important not only because it threatens the freedom and conduciveness of the environment at institutions of higher learning. At a more fundamental level, such conduct is unacceptable because it violates personal dignity and shall not be tolerated at HEIs in Pakistan under any circumstance. For this purpose, HEC has implemented *Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)*.

This policy has been made pursuant to the powers granted to the HEC under the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002, and is binding on all higher education institutions in the country. In accordance with the terms of this policy, sexual harassment shall be prohibited at HEIs in Pakistan, and shall constitute a punishable offence under the policy. The HEC affirms the right of every member of the HEI community live, study and work in an environment that is free from sexual harassment. The goal of this policy is to prevent sexual harassment from taking place, and where necessary to act upon complaints of sexual harassment promptly, fairly, judiciously and with due regard to confidentiality for all parties concerned. For the implementation of the policy HEI is requested to take action as per policy. Actions to be taken by the HEI is attached.

It is requested to share implementation report & copies of notification (including contact details) till 11th August 2023. Please share a report through email to Mr.Shafique Abbas, Superintendent (shabbas@hec.gov.pk)

Yours sincerely

Engr. SALEEMULLAH Sohoo
ssohoo@hec.gov.pk

The Registrars

All Public and Private Sector Universities

Copy for information to:

- i. ES to Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- ii. PS to Director General (R&AA), Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- iii. In charge, HEC Regional Centers (Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta)

“Policy on Protection against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions”

Applicability:

This policy applies to actions by students, faculty, staff, other members of the HEI community (such as interns, residents etc.), or third parties (such as service providers, visitors etc.), when misconduct occurs.

Actions to be Taken by the University

Focal Persons

The HEI shall designate at least two members of the HEI administration (the “Focal Persons”), at least one of whom shall be a woman, to offer support and immediate assistance to those who have experienced sexual harassment. Contact information of such individuals shall be easily available, including on the HEIs website.

Inquiry Committee

The HEI shall constitute an Inquiry Committee to investigate and adjudicate any allegations of prohibited conduct (the “Inquiry Committee”) in accordance with the provisions of Section-7 of the policy. Those who have experienced sexual harassment may also contact members of the Inquiry Committee for support and advice.

Preventive Measures

1. To ensure prevention of sexual harassment on campus, HEIs should develop programs to educate its staff, faculty and students as well as provide written material for reference. Education is essential to sensitizing the university faculty, staff and students in order to eliminate sexual harassment on campus. This shall be done in multiple ways, including those listed below.
2. The HEC’s Sexual Harassment Policy, any of the university’s internal policies as well information regarding the 2010 Act shall be:
 - a. available on the HEI website
 - b. be a part of the package that all new hires receive
 - c. be a part of orientation of new students and included in any written material given to them
 - d. be included in the HEI’s Prospectus (a summarized version)
 - e. displayed in prominent locations on campus
3. The names of the Focal Persons and the members of the Inquiry Committee shall be made visible/accessible to the HEI community through its website, posted on notice boards, etc.
4. The HEI shall ensure that its relevant members (e.g., Focal Persons, members of the Inquiry Committee, HR personnel, etc.) attend a training to educate themselves on sexual harassment and relevant the laws and policies. Once trained, designated HR personnel shall be made responsible for educating all personnel, staff, faculty, students that join the HEI. This will be an ongoing activity.
5. All departments at HEI must disseminate and display information about these programs, what constitutes sexual harassment, how to respond to it and what to do when someone asks for advice about sexual harassment.