Prevention of Sexual Harassment Po (SH) Policy

An atmosphere of mutual respect among members of the academic community is necessary for Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies to function as a Temple of Education. Any violation of mutual trust, any form of threats or exploitation, damages the institution's educational process by undermining the essential freedoms of inquiry and expression. Students, staff, and faculty must feel personally secure for real learning to take place. As a place of work and study, VIPS ensures its campus to be free of discrimination and harassment in all of its forms, including threats and exploitation. All students, staff, and faculty are assured that the institute will take action to prevent such misconduct and that anyone who engages in such behaviour is subject to disciplinary procedures. VIPS has a legal obligation to provide a harassment / discrimination free environment, and is committed to maintaining an academic, working environment which is free of inappropriate and disrespectful conduct of a derogatory nature regarding any woman especially when such conduct adversely affects a student's or an employee's work / educational environment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Discrimination and / or harassment are prohibited personnel practices when it has the effect or purpose of abusing others based on direct or implied discrimination. It is also a prohibited personnel practice when it interferes with an individual's academic, social or work performance This policy applies to all student/students, Employee / Employee, Employee / Student, Employee / Members of Management or Student / Members of Management cases of discrimination or harassment. The members of this institute should be aware that VIPS prohibits and does not tolerate sexual harassment of its faculty, staff, and students. Each member of this institute is expected to support efforts to keep the campus free of sexual harassment.

SCOPE OF GUIDELINES

It applies to all the following who can be either victim or accused:

- All students, i.e an undergraduate, post graduate and even students who have had a back paper in previous years.
- Administrative and support Staff, Office assistants, and visiting staff – permanent and Temporary
- Faculty members – Permanent and temporary
- Members of management
- Contract Labours

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In order to foster a fearless environment, the **INSTITUTE** is geared up in taking proactive steps in preventing sexual harassment and resolving disputes of such nature. The policies have been framed in accordance with the **VISHAKA GUIDELINES** instituted by the hon'ble Supreme Court in the year 1997.

These are as mentioned below-

- To provide counselling services to the complainant
- To undertake workshops and training programmes at regular intervals. (Twice in a year)
- Sensitizing the students, faculty members and employees regarding the sexual harassment guidelines
- To pursue the complaint and the safety of the complainant
- To assure confidentiality of the case
- To form the Internal Complaints Committee to deal with the cases relating to Sexual Harassment
- To inform the members about the Internal Complaints Committee by displaying the same at conspicuous place
- Provide necessary facilities to the Internal Committee as the case may be, for dealing with the complaint and conducting inquiry;
- Assist in securing the attendance of respondent and witnesses before the Internal Committee
- Make available such information to the Internal Committee as the case may be, as it may require

Prevention and Prohibition

Prohibition: VIPS has a 'zero tolerance policy' towards sexual harassment. The management of the institute ensures that there is no incident of sexual harassment at the campus.

Prevention: Regular awareness programs for the students, teaching and non-teaching staff are conducted in the institute by experts of eminence. In the prospectus and the handbooks given to students during the time of admission, the zero tolerance policy of the institute finds mention clearly.

Redressal System: The institute has an Internal Complaints Committee to handle complaints of sexual harassment. The committee comprises faculty members, non teaching staff and also students. The presiding officer of this committee is a senior woman faculty member of the institute.

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Any complaint received with respect to sexual harassment is dealt with by the Committee within a period of 90 days from the date of the complaint. During the course of inquiry, the complainant is also entitled for interim redressal in the following ways-

- Complainant's transfer or respondent's transfer;
- Leave up to 3 months;
- Restraining respondent from reporting on or evaluating the work or performance or tests or examination of complainant
- If there is a definite threat, restraining the Respondent's entry into the campus;

If anyone is found guilty of committing an offence of sexual harassment, he/she may be punished according to the applicable service rules. If the respondent is student and found guilty can be punished with either of below mentioned punishments:

- **Withholding the privileges** of the student such as access to the **library, auditorium, scholarships, allowances, and identity card**;
- **Suspension** or restriction of entry into the campus for a specific period;
- **Expel and strike off name from the rolls** of the institution, including denial of readmission, if the offence so warrants;
- Award reformative punishments like **mandatory counselling and, or, performance of community services.**

'Campus' The workplace includes Campus which is defined as

- the location or the land of VIPS;
- classrooms, libraries, laboratories, lecture halls, Auditorium and conference rooms/seminar halls, toilets, student centres, common rooms, parking areas, playgrounds and other amenities like health rooms, canteens, etc.,
- are situated and also includes extended campus and covers within its scope places visited as a student of the institute like the locations outside the institution on field trips, internships, study tours, excursions, short- term placements, places used for camps, cultural festivals, sport meets and such other activities where a person is participating in the capacity of an employee or a student of the institution

'Student'

- a person duly admitted and pursuing a program of study through regular mode,

Including:

- a student who is in the process of taking admission in VIPS campus, although not yet admitted;
- a student who is a participant in any of the activities in VIPS other than the institute where such student is enrolled shall be treated as student

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'Third Party Harassment'

- Where sexual harassment occurs as a result of an act or omission by any third party or outsider, who is not an employee or a student of the institute, but a visitor to the institute in some other capacity or for some other purpose or reason.

'Sexual Harassment' The definition of sexual harassment is also extended:

An unwanted conduct with sexual undertones if it occurs or which is persistent and which demeans, humiliates or creates a hostile and intimidating environment or is calculated to induce submission by actual or threatened adverse consequences. This is in addition to the definition provided under the Po(SH) Act.

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