

# **Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy for COEP Technological University, Pune (COEP Tech) Based on the POSH Act, 2013**

## **1. Introduction**

COEP Technological University, erstwhile College of Engineering, Pune (CoEP), founded in 1854, stands as a beacon of excellence in technical education and research. With over a century and a half of illustrious history, COEP Tech University has made significant contributions to technological advancements and societal progress. The institution is recognized for its dedication to addressing global challenges through innovative solutions and a steadfast commitment to ethical practices. In alignment with these values, COEP Tech University has adopted a comprehensive zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. This policy is framed in accordance with the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act), underscoring the institution's commitment to ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all.

## **2. Objective**

The primary objective of this policy is to establish a secure and supportive environment at COEP Tech University for every member of its community, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors. This policy seeks to:

- Prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment.
- Prohibit all forms of sexual harassment within the campus and during any COEP Tech University -related activities.
- Provide a robust and transparent mechanism for addressing and redressing complaints of sexual harassment, ensuring justice and support for the aggrieved.

### **3. Scope**

This policy is comprehensive and applies to:

- All students, faculty, staff, and visitors of COEP Tech University.
- Any individual associated with COEP Tech University during its activities, which include but are not limited to off-campus events, internships, and study abroad programs.
- Incidents occurring within the COEP Tech University campus as well as those arising during official COEP Tech University events or activities conducted off-site.

### **4. Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment at COEP Tech University encompasses, but is not limited to, the definition mentioned in the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) but also is defined through this policy by the elucidation of the following unwelcome acts or behaviours, whether directly or by implication:

- Physical contact and advances, such as touching, groping, or any form of physical aggression.
- A demand or request for sexual favours, including any form of quid pro quo.
- Making sexually coloured remarks, including comments or jokes that demean, embarrass, or intimidate.
- Showing or distributing pornography, including unsolicited sharing of explicit content through digital platforms.
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

These behaviours are considered highly inappropriate and are strictly prohibited within the COEP Tech University community, as they undermine the dignity and safety of individuals.

## 5. Internal Committee (IC)

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, COEP Tech University has established an Internal Committee (IC) composed of:

1. **Chairperson:** A senior female employee of COEP Tech University who will lead the committee with integrity and fairness.
2. **Female Employee Member:** One female employee of COEP Tech University to represent and support the concerns of female community members.
3. **Male Employee Member:** One male employee of COEP Tech University to ensure balanced representation and perspectives within the committee.
4. **Female Employee Member:** One additional female employee of COEP Tech University to provide further support and insight.
5. **Expert Member:** An external expert with significant experience in social work, legal knowledge, or specific expertise in addressing issues of sexual harassment, to bring an impartial and knowledgeable perspective.

Committee	Name	Contact Details
Presiding Officer	Dr. (Mrs.) Jibi Abraham	Ph: 9561970885, Email: ja.comp@coeptech.ac.in
Committee Members	Dr. (Mrs.) V. S. Rajguru	Ph: 9822849097 Email: vsr.elec@coeptech.ac.in
	Dr. (Mrs.) Y. S. Patil	Ph:9423975295 Email: ysp.physics@coeptech.ac.in
	Dr. U. V. Pise	Ph:8097537150 Email: uvp.mech@coeptech.ac.in
	Ms. P. S. Pawar	Ph. 9049328959 Email id: psp.mfg@coep.ac.in
	Mrs. Seema Salunkhe	Ph. 8788593683
Expert Member	Dr. (Mrs.)Tejaswini Malegaonkar	Ph:9423004529 Email: tejaswini.malegaonkar@ilslaw.in

For any instance of sexual harassment in the University, contact the above committee for needful

## 6. Duties and Responsibilities of the Internal Committee

The Internal Committee is entrusted with the following critical responsibilities:

- **Receiving Complaints:** Accept and acknowledge complaints of sexual harassment from aggrieved individuals, ensuring they are heard and supported from the outset.
- **Conducting Inquiries:** Carry out thorough, fair, and impartial inquiries into complaints, adhering strictly to principles of natural justice, ensuring both parties can present their cases.
- **Recommending Actions:** Suggest appropriate actions against perpetrators, which may include disciplinary measures such as written apologies, warnings, reprimands, suspension, termination, or withholding of promotions/pay rises/increments, depending on the severity of the misconduct.
- **Providing Interim Relief:** Offer necessary interim relief to complainants during the inquiry process. This could include transferring the complainant or respondent, or granting the complainant leave of up to three months, to ensure their safety and well-being.
- **Spreading Awareness:** Conduct regular educational and training sessions to promote awareness of sexual harassment, the POSH Act, and this policy among all members of the COEP Tech University community.
- **Preparing Reports:** Compile and submit detailed annual reports to the Vice Chancellor of COEP Tech University, highlighting the number of cases filed, resolved, and pending, to ensure transparency and accountability.

## 7. Complaint Mechanism

- **Lodging a Complaint:** Aggrieved individuals can lodge a complaint with the IC in writing within three months of the incident. The IC has the

discretion to extend this period by an additional three months if it is convinced that there were justifiable reasons for the delay.

- **Confidentiality:** The IC will maintain strict confidentiality regarding the identity of the complainant, respondent, and witnesses throughout the inquiry process, protecting their privacy and dignity.
- **Inquiry Process:** The IC will conduct a comprehensive, unbiased inquiry by following established principles of natural justice. Both the complainant and the respondent will be given equal opportunity to present their case, ensuring a fair hearing according to the principals of natural justice.
- **Interim Relief:** The IC may recommend interim measures to protect the complainant during the inquiry process. These measures could include transferring the complainant or respondent, or granting the complainant leave for up to three months or even sending the victim for counselling.

## 8. Redressal

- **Substantiated Allegations:** If the IC finds the allegations to be substantiated, it will recommend appropriate actions, which may include:
  - Issuing a written apology from the respondent.
  - Giving a formal warning or reprimand.
  - Suspending or terminating the respondent, or withholding their promotion/pay rise/increment.
  - Any other action deemed appropriate by the IC, tailored to the severity of the misconduct.
- **Malicious Complaints:** In cases where a complaint is found to be malicious or based on false evidence, the IC may recommend disciplinary action against the complainant to uphold the integrity of the policy and process.

## 9. Protection Against Retaliation

COEP Tech University strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment or participate in the inquiry process. Retaliation, in any form, will be subject to disciplinary action, ensuring that complainants and witnesses feel secure and supported in coming forward without fear of reprisal.

## **10. Awareness and Training**

To foster a culture of respect, awareness, and prevention, COEP Tech University is committed to:

- Conducting regular workshops and seminars on sexual harassment and the POSH Act for all members of the COEP Tech University community, including employees, faculty, and administrative staff, every six months. These sessions aim to foster a deeper understanding of the issues and reinforce the institution's commitment to addressing them effectively.
- Providing specialized training sessions for IC members to enhance their ability to handle sexual harassment cases effectively and sensitively.
- Ensuring that information about this policy is widely disseminated and easily accessible to all members of the COEP Tech University community, through various communication channels and educational materials.

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

The Internal Committee will continuously monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. An annual report detailing the number of cases filed, resolved, and pending will be submitted to the Director of COEP Tech University and shall also adhere to the compliance obligations to be filed before appropriate authorities as mentioned in the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act). This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to incorporate feedback and evolving best practices.

## **12. Policy Integration with the POSH Act**

- **Read with the POSH Act:** This policy must be read and understood in conjunction with the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The provisions of this policy are to be treated as part and parcel of the POSH Act, ensuring a comprehensive understanding and application of the law.
- **Legal Framework:** All actions taken under this policy will be in compliance with the POSH Act, reinforcing the legal framework that governs the prevention, prohibition, and redressal of sexual harassment at the workplace.

## **13. Additional Detailed Points**

- **Support Services:** COEP Tech University will provide support services such as counselling and legal assistance to complainants to help them navigate the process and deal with any emotional or psychological impact on the victim.
- **Periodic Sensitization Programs:** COEP Tech University will organize periodic sensitization programs for students, staff, and faculty to foster a culture of respect and awareness about gender sensitivity and the implications of sexual harassment.
- **Record Keeping:** The IC will maintain detailed records of all complaints, inquiries, and actions taken, ensuring that documentation is thorough and preserved in accordance with confidentiality requirements.

## **14. Contact Information**

For any queries or to file a complaint, individuals may contact the Internal Committee at:

## **Internal Committee, COEP Technological University**

Phone: 9561970885

Email: [ja.comp@coeptech.ac.in](mailto:ja.comp@coeptech.ac.in)

### **15. Conclusion**

**COEP Technological University** (COEP Tech) is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all its members. This policy reflects our unwavering dedication to preventing and addressing sexual harassment in accordance with the POSH Act, 2013. By adhering to this policy, COEP Technological University aims to uphold the dignity, rights, and well-being of every individual within its community, ensuring a culture of respect and support that enhances the overall educational and professional experience at the institution.