

NMSM GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, KALPETTA
WAYANAD, KERALA

Affiliated to University of Calicut, Kerala



Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) Policy Document

2019-20

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1. Introduction

The Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) of NMSM Government College, Kalpetta, has been established under the guidelines of the *Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013*. The committee's primary objective is to ensure a safe and secure environment for everyone associated with the institution—whether students, faculty, staff, or visitors—by preventing and addressing incidents of sexual harassment. The ICC is committed to maintaining a work and academic space where dignity and respect are upheld. By promoting a culture of equality and inclusivity, the committee works toward eliminating any form of harassment, thereby contributing to a positive institutional environment.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of the Internal Complaint Committee are rooted in fostering respect and preventing sexual harassment within the institution. Firstly, it aims to establish a respectful and inclusive atmosphere where everyone—irrespective of gender—can work and study without fear of harassment or discrimination. The ICC also seeks to provide a robust platform for individuals to safely report grievances and complaints regarding sexual harassment. Ensuring swift, fair, and confidential investigations, the committee strives to maintain impartiality at every step of the process. Ultimately, the ICC aims to recommend and enforce appropriate actions based on its findings, ensuring that any issues are resolved justly, thereby restoring the safety and dignity of the aggrieved party.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all individuals connected to NMSM Government College, including faculty members, administrative staff, students, and any visitors within the premises. It extends its protection beyond the college's physical boundaries, covering off-campus events organized by the institution. The ICC's policy addresses all forms of sexual harassment, discrimination, or misconduct that undermine an individual's dignity in the workplace or academic setting. Whether the harassment takes place within college premises or during institution-led events or activities, this policy ensures that such grievances are covered under its scope.

4. Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, as defined by this policy, encompasses a wide range of behaviors that are unwelcome and of a sexual nature. These include physical contact or advances made without consent, demands or requests for sexual favors, and making sexually colored remarks or comments. It also includes the sharing or display of pornographic material. In addition, any form of unwelcome verbal or non-verbal conduct that makes an individual feel uncomfortable or disrespected in a sexual manner falls under the scope of sexual harassment. The ICC recognizes that these behaviors can be direct or indirect, and it remains committed to addressing all forms of such misconduct in a timely and sensitive manner.

5. Constitution of the ICC

The composition of the ICC is designed to ensure that the investigation and resolution of complaints are handled fairly and sensitively. The committee is chaired by a senior woman faculty member, who serves as the **Presiding Officer**. Other members include two faculty members who are either experienced in social work or possess legal knowledge relevant to issues of sexual harassment, along with one non-teaching staff member. Additionally, an external expert, typically from an NGO or someone with expertise in sexual harassment issues, is included to ensure an unbiased perspective. Importantly, the committee ensures

that at least 50% of its members are women. The ICC is reconstituted every three years to ensure a fresh, diverse, and balanced approach to addressing complaints.

6. Functions of the ICC

The ICC plays a vital role in maintaining a safe and inclusive environment at NMSM Government College. One of its primary responsibilities is to receive complaints of sexual harassment from individuals within the college. Upon receiving a complaint, the committee conducts a formal inquiry, ensuring that the process is both impartial and timely. Throughout the inquiry, confidentiality is maintained to protect the dignity of the involved parties. Following the investigation, the ICC provides recommendations to the institution based on the findings, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to address the complaint. In addition to its investigative functions, the committee also serves a preventive role by organizing workshops and awareness programs on gender sensitization and the prevention of sexual harassment. These programs aim to educate the college community and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and inclusion.

7. Procedure for Filing Complaints

Anyone associated with NMSM Government College, including students, staff, and visitors, can file a complaint with the ICC if they believe they have experienced sexual harassment. Complaints can be submitted either in writing or via email to the Presiding Officer of the ICC. To ensure the timely redressal of grievances, complaints should be lodged within three months of the incident; however, under exceptional circumstances, this time limit can be extended by the ICC. Once a complaint is filed, the ICC initiates a formal investigation within 90 days. Both the complainant and the respondent are provided opportunities to present their sides, and the inquiry is conducted with fairness and impartiality. The final report, detailing the findings and recommendations, is submitted to the institution within 10 days after the inquiry's conclusion. Appropriate actions are then taken by the institution based on these recommendations.

8. Preventive Measures

The ICC is also proactive in its efforts to prevent sexual harassment within the college community. It organizes regular gender-sensitization workshops and educational programs for both students and staff to raise awareness about the issue of sexual harassment. These programs serve to create an environment where respect and equality are upheld. In addition, the ICC ensures that posters and informational materials are prominently displayed across campus to promote awareness of the committee's functions and the process for reporting grievances. A zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of harassment and discrimination is enforced, further strengthening the preventive framework of the institution.

9. Redressal and Penalties

Following the conclusion of the ICC's inquiry, a range of actions may be recommended, depending on the severity of the complaint and the findings of the investigation. The respondent may be required to issue a formal apology, or they could face a written warning. In more severe cases, the ICC may recommend the suspension or termination of employment or student status. Other disciplinary actions, in line with the institution's rules and regulations, may also be taken to ensure justice and accountability.

10. Confidentiality

Maintaining strict confidentiality is a key principle of the ICC. All complaints and proceedings are handled with the utmost discretion to protect the privacy and dignity of the parties involved. Any breach of confidentiality by any member of the ICC or any individual involved in the proceedings will result in disciplinary action, ensuring that trust in the redressal process is upheld.

11. Appeals

If either the complainant or the respondent is dissatisfied with the outcome or decision of the ICC, they have the right to appeal. Appeals must be filed with the appropriate authority within 30 days of receiving the decision. This provision ensures that all parties have access to further recourse if they feel that justice has not been served.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

The ICC is responsible for regularly monitoring the implementation of this policy to ensure its effectiveness. Annual reports will be prepared detailing the complaints received, the

outcomes of investigations, and the actions taken. This process of monitoring and evaluation promotes transparency and accountability, ensuring that the institution continues to provide a safe and respectful environment for all.

Conclusion

This policy document outlines the commitment of NMSM Government College, Kalpetta, to preventing sexual harassment and maintaining a secure and inclusive environment. The ICC's roles, procedures, and preventive measures reflect the institution's dedication to upholding the dignity of all individuals and promoting an environment of equality and respect.



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20/11/2019
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