INSTITUTE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Sexual Harassment and Assault Policy and Procedure

Governing Council Approved Policy

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Version Control

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Approving Body	Governing Council
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Policy Custodian	Principal
Policy Contact	Principal
Related Documents	Student Code of Conduct, Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure, Human Resources Policy and Procedure.
Related Legislations	• Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (Amended 2022) • HEC Policy Guidelines Against Sexual Harassment in HEIs in Pakistan (2019/2020) • Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), 1860 (Section 509)
Policy Benchmarking	University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Southern Cross Institute (SCI) Australia University of New England Canterbury Institute of Management (CIOM) Australia

1. Preamble

a. Purpose

Richmond Institute of Higher Education (the 'Institute' or 'RIHE') *Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure* ('the Policy') outlines the management of sexual harassment incidents at the Institute and the timely resolution of related complaints. This Policy also promotes the safety and wellbeing of student and staff and supports a culture of respect and inclusion and positive behavioural change.

b. Background

RIHE has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual assault, sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. Gender-based violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other behaviours arising from gender inequality, power imbalance, or discrimination.

The Institute has the primary duty of care to eliminate or minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and students.

This Policy supports the Institute in meeting its legal and regulatory obligations through the development and implementation of prevention, education, and response strategies that promote awareness, support, and empowerment. It is informed by sector guidance, including the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan's Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions, and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (as amended in 2022).

c. Definition

For definitions, please refer to the '*Glossary of Terms*'.

2. Scope

This Policy covers everyone in the RIHE community and applies across all Institute-related settings, both on- and off-campus.

3. Policy Statement

The Institute is committed to creating a work and study environment which celebrates diversity and inclusion and is free of sexual harassment and discrimination for all. The Institute regards sexual harassment as a serious breach and accepts its responsibilities under federal and state equal opportunity laws and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that no staff member or student subjects another person to or is subjected to sexual harassment within or any Institute activity. Discrimination against any individual on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation is not tolerated by the Institute.

4. Principles

The guiding principles of this Policy are to:

a. provide a safe working and learning environment which is free from sexual harassment where all staff members and students at the Institute are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect;
b. implement training and awareness-raising strategies to ensure that all staff and students know their rights and responsibilities;

c. protect the health and well-being of complainants by ensuring any acts of victimisation or retaliation are investigated and dealt with promptly;
d. encourage the reporting of behaviour which breaches this Policy;
e. always promote appropriate standards of personal conduct;
f. raise awareness and implement preventative, responsive and relevant strategies that value diversity, enable access and promote cultural inclusion.

5. Responsibilities

a. RIHE Governing Council is responsible for ensuring that the Policy principles have sufficient coverage and the Policy is put into practice.

b. Students and staff are responsible for treating fellow members with respect regardless of background, engaging in a positive, respectful and constructive manner always and reporting any incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying to the Institute.

c. The Dean or nominee has the ultimate responsibility to ensure effective management of sexual harassment and gender-based violence incidents. The Dean or nominee monitors sexual harassment-related procedures and ensures their communication to students and staff.

d. All managerial staff are trained to handle incidents appropriately, including managing personal data, escalation points and key contact person.

6. Prevention and Support

The Institute recognises that promoting changing attitudes and behaviours towards sexual harassment helps to build a culture of respect thus aiming to minimise the number of incidents that might occur. RIHE does this by implementing a range of prevention strategies including but not limited to:

a. ensuring the immediate safety, privacy and well-being of a student or staff member who has experienced an incident of sexual harassment;
b. conducting risk assessments and implementing controls on any identified risks related to sexual harassment;
c. information about internal and external services to staff and students, including counselling and medical services, local sexual assault services, police, and hospitals are accessible to students and staff through RIHE website, the *Student Handbook* and the *Staff Handbook*;
d. providing access to an internal Student Support Manager as a confidential support service. Students may engage directly with the Student Support Manager, without the requirement for Institute involvement, and such consultations will be managed with strict confidentiality;
e. students are referred to external services when necessary, including:
f. mandatory orientation programs for new students and staff on expected behaviours and potential repercussions for inappropriate behaviour;
g. sexual violence, drug and alcohol abuse prevention education posters are explained clearly in the *Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure*;
h. students are educated on this Policy at orientation and staff are provided with a copy of this Policy as part of their induction.

For a detailed outline of sexual harassment-related complaints procedure, please refer to *Appendix I*.

7. Ethical Bystander Intervention

The Institute encourages and values safe Ethical Bystander Intervention by students, staff and affiliates of the Institute to prevent or stop sexual misconduct from occurring or continuing.

a. Ethical Bystander Intervention can include:

i. being aware of situations that might include an incident of sexual misconduct;
ii. determining whether the situation raises an issue that needs to be addressed by further investigation or offering assistance and/or checking if unsure;
iii. taking responsibility for the situation;
iv. taking indirect or direct action in a safe and appropriate manner to address the situation (e.g. calling the Police).

8. Culture of Inclusion

a. A culturally inclusive environment requires mutual respect, effective relationships, clear communication, explicit understanding of expectations and critical self-reflection. In an inclusive environment, people of all cultural orientations can:
   i. freely express who they are, their own opinions and points of view;
   ii. fully participate in teaching, learning, work and social activities;
   iii. feel safe from abuse, harassment or unfair criticism.

b. RIHE aims at establishing an environment where:
   i. individual students can participate fully in classes, aim to study better, aim to achieve better academic results, experience less stress and have enhanced career prospects;
   ii. all staff can interact more fully with other staff and students, and can extend and develop their own cultural awareness;
   iii. RIHE as an organisation benefit from culturally diverse staff and students through exposure to alternate perspectives and experiences.

9. Confidentiality and Privacy

a. The information provided by a complainant is treated as confidential and provided only to staff or external agencies who need access to the information for the purposes set out in this Policy.

b. Except where the Institute is compelled or obliged by the operation of the law, the Institute keeps confidential all particulars relating to a complaint of sexual misconduct, unless the complainant consents to the disclosure of part or all of the information for a specified purpose. Counselling provided by the Student Counsellor is treated as strictly confidential.

c. If confidentiality is breached, the matter shall be investigated by the Dean or the nominee who takes appropriate action.

d. Information about individual disclosures and formal complaints is collected and stored confidentially in accordance with the Institute's *Records Management Policy and Procedure*.

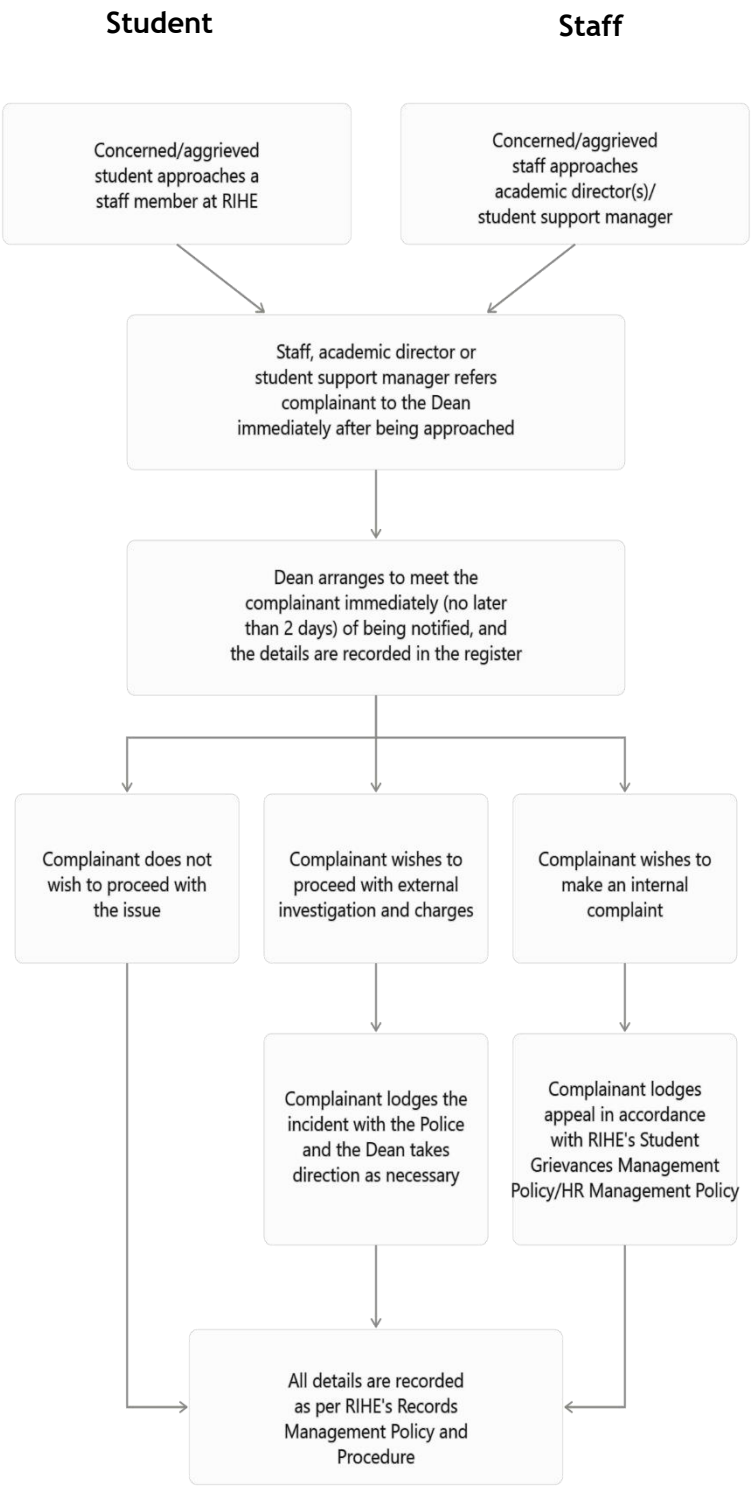
10. False, Vexatious Complaints

Any person who knowingly makes a false, vexatious or malicious complaint is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the requirements law and relevant Institute's policies and procedures.

11. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Dean or the nominee is responsible for evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of preventative measures and support services annually and reporting to the Governing Council.

Appendix I: Sexual Harassment and Assault Complaint Procedure



Addendum I: Action Plan for Gender-Based Violence

RIHE is committed to a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and gender-based violence. These behaviours undermine safety, dignity, and wellbeing, and are inconsistent with institutional values and legal obligations. This Action Plan, developed in alignment with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (as amended in 2022), outlines RIHE's commitment to prevention, response, and accountability.

RIHE adopts a whole-of-organisation approach, embedding prevention and response measures across students and staff, teaching and learning (including work-integrated learning), student services, business and operations, and research and higher degree pathways. RIHE collects and monitors data on disclosures and responses to sexual harassment and gender-based violence to inform continuous improvement of its policies, procedures, and support services.

Respectful relationships education and evidence-based prevention initiatives are incorporated into learning, workplace practices, and student services. These may include workshops, speaker led sessions, or online modules on consent, bystander intervention, recognising power imbalances, and respect for diversity and inclusion; curriculum integration of case studies and learning activities; orientation and induction sessions addressing respectful conduct; and collaborations with external organisations to deliver targeted prevention programs.

Responses to disclosures and reports are trauma-informed, victim-survivor-centred, and procedurally fair. Safety, confidentiality, and immediate support will be prioritised, and independent expert advice may be sought in complex cases. Clear, accessible, and culturally responsive reporting pathways are maintained, independent of power dynamics. Students and staff are informed of their right to escalate complaints and RIHE cooperates fully with any Ombudsman investigations and recommendations.

RIHE does not provide or manage student accommodation. Where links to external accommodation providers are shared, information is accurate and supportive of safe and respectful housing options. Accountability and transparency are central to this *Action Plan*. RIHE complies with the forthcoming Higher Education Commission (HEC) Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions, including meeting service standards, referral pathways, and data reporting requirements. RIHE collects and monitors data on disclosures and responses to sexual harassment and gender-based violence to inform continuous improvement of its policies, procedures, and support services. RIHE monitors trends through internal data collection and may utilise relevant sector-wide reports and research to inform continuous improvement.
This *Action Plan* will be overseen at governance level, with senior leadership accountability. Regular training is provided to staff and students to build awareness, responsibility, and capability to prevent and respond effectively to gender-based violence. Implementation is aligned with obligations under the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (as amended in 2022), and other applicable provincial labour and workplace safety legislation. Policies and practices are subject to continuous review and improvement, informed by evidence, expert advice, and evolving national standards.