



UttarBangla University College, UUC

UUC Safeguarding and Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy

Background

UUC is a an HSC and University College in Kakina, in the Lalmonirhat District. Our students study at HSC, Degree and Masters levels. Students studying for HSC are typically aged 16-17 and therefore fall within the Universal Declaration of definition of a child; i.e. being a person under 18 years of age. Other students for the most part are 18 plus and therefore do not fall within this definition. Whether students are within this definition or not, UUC's intention is to provide a safe environment for all students. UUC's Safeguarding and Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy has been created to protect all staff and students from sexual and other harassment and to ensure any such allegations will be treated seriously and will be investigated and appropriate action taken if found to be true. UUC has a "zero tolerance" approach to sexual and other harassment.

The Aim

The aim of this policy is:

- to raise awareness of the unacceptability of sexual or other harassment;
- to set up a mechanism for the safe reporting of allegations of sexual harassment;
- to set up a procedure for the investigation of allegations of sexual harassment;

Definitions

Safeguarding is a term which covers many areas of conduct but this policy will focus on sexual harassment. Other forms of harassment, whilst not specifically mentioned, will be covered by this policy including bullying whether face to face or online.

Sexual harassment can be defined as inappropriate and unwelcome conduct or behaviour of a sexual nature perceived by the receiver as harassment, which has an adverse effect on the dignity of women and men both inside and, sometimes, outside of the College. Whilst both men and women can experience sexual harassment, it is usually women who are most often victims of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment covers a wide range of behaviours and all staff, faculty members and students are prohibited from engaging in such behaviours which includes the following:

- unwanted physical contact
- harassment via sms, social media, internet, email, phone calls, letters;
- demeaning, intimidating, insulting or sexually aggressive comments;
- threats, implied threats that refusing sexual advances will result in adverse academic results or employment status;
- using administrative or professional authority by a senior to establish a sexual relationship with a junior or creating fear or intimidation;
- taking photographs or videos for the purpose of blackmail or to defame someone;
- spreading rumours to humiliate, intimidate or socially disgrace someone;
- displaying pornographic images or indecent pictures, drawings, writing on walls, notice boards, or via social media;
- eve teasing;
- stalking.

Measures to prevent Sexual Harassment

UUC will take appropriate measures to curb Sexual and other Harassment including the following:

- create a climate of respect;
- advertise copies of the Safeguarding and Sexual Harassment Policy;
- arrange an awareness session for all staff on an annual basis;
- arrange an awareness raising session with each new intake of students;
- create the role of Safeguarding Lead;
- advertise the name of the Safeguarding Lead;
- establish a confidential reporting system;
- ensure confidentiality of the person making the allegation;
- set up a Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee ;
- ensure the speedy investigations of all allegations.

Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee

Membership

A Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee of no less than 5 members will be set and it will be headed by a woman, as per the recommendations of the High Court. The majority on this committee will be made up of women. The committee will present an annual report of its activities, maintaining the confidentiality of complainants. UUC's Safeguarding Lead will be a female member of the committee and will be a teaching staff member at UUC.

Procedure and Steps of the Complaints Process

A formal, written complaint should be submitted to the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible after the incident and should contain the following information:

- Date of the incident
- Name of person making the complaint
- Address and phone number of person making the complaint
- Nature of the incident: include what happened, time, where it took place and names of any witnesses.
- Name of alleged offender.

This can also be done online using the dedicated email which will be password protected safeuuc@gmail.com or by phone or sms using a dedicated phone number.

A complaint can be submitted by a complainant or by someone who has a concern.

Investigation Guidelines

- In minor incidents, the Safeguarding Lead can dispose of the matter summarily with the consent of both parties, if necessary, in consultation with the Chairperson.
- In all other cases the Sexual Harassment Committee will investigate the matter.
- The Committee will first consider the written complaint.
- The Committee can call the complainant to a meeting for clarification or to give further evidence and must ensure that the complainant is treated sympathetically.
- The alleged offender can be called by the Committee for a hearing and his/her version of the incident should be recorded.
- The Committee can seek legal advice if and when required.
- The Committee will take a decision on the basis of the views of majority.

The Safeguarding Lead should enter the information on a Report Form and this should be attached to the written complaint and stored in a secure place.

Malicious, false or frivolous accusations

A complainant whose allegations are found to be both false and brought with malicious intent will be subject to disciplinary action.

Retaliation

No student, employee, applicant for employment, or member of the public shall be subject to interference, coercion or reprisal for:

- *action taken in good faith to seek advice concerning sexual harassment/assault;
- *filing a sexual harassment/assault complaint;
- *serving as a witness or a panel member in the investigation of a sexual harassment allegation

Resolving a complaint

The investigation committee will complete the investigation within three weeks of receiving the complaint, and will communicate the outcome to the complainant and the accused.

If there is insufficient evidence to substantiate the complaint, there will be no further action, but the complainant will be supported by UUC to report any future incidences of harassment or retaliation.

If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary measures will be taken. Further support and advice will be made available to the complainant once the investigation is complete.

Disciplinary measures

The full range of disciplinary processes is possible. Depending on the seriousness of the incident the disciplinary measures may include:

- Written warning;
- Demotion (in the case of staff);
- Suspension;
- Dismissal (in the case of staff);
- Expulsion (in the case of students);
- Referral to external legal authorities, including the police.

The complaint and the results of the investigation will be kept on record.