

# ULAB Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) strives to provide a place of work and study free of sexual harassment. There is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind. Whenever a case of sexual harassment is reported or observed, ULAB will take all measures possible to stop the harassment with immediate effect, and take necessary disciplinary and legal actions against the offender.

Sexual harassment breaches the core values of ULAB and is a violation of human and workers' rights. Anyone may be subject to this behavior irrespective of age, sex, marital status, education or profession. Therefore, this policy aims to protect every individual at ULAB irrespective of religion, caste, sex, sexual orientation, and ethnic group.

This policy is designed to:

- Provide a mechanism for the protection of persons suffering from sexual harassment
- Create awareness of ULAB's zero tolerance to sexual harassment
- Define procedures for making a complaint, investigation, and disciplinary measures
- Ensure implementation of the policy and related code of conduct.

## **What is sexual harassment?**

Sexual harassment is defined as inappropriate, unwanted and unwelcome conduct or behavior of a sexual nature perceived as harassment by the receiver, which has an adverse effect on the dignity of women and men both inside and, in certain circumstances, outside the University. Any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and any unseemly sexual conduct could also be construed as sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment occurs when any behavior creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment, even if offence is not intended. Sometimes what is perceived as sexual harassment by one person may not seem so to another person. The defining features, however, are that the behavior is offensive to and unwanted by the recipient and would be regarded as sexual harassment by any reasonable person.

Sexual harassment is best not limited to, any direct or indirect form of the following behaviors:

- Unwanted physical contact or conduct
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Demeaning, insulting, intimidating or sexually aggressive comments
- Threats or implication that refusal of sexual advances will have an adverse effect on academic or employment conditions
- Demeaning comments or psychological pressure for refusing sexual advances
- Any demand or request to establish a sexual relationship
- Sending sexually explicit or implicit letters, emails, SMS, images, video, social media, etc.
- Displaying pornographic materials or indecent pictures or drawing
- Taking any form of photographs or video recording for blackmailing or defaming someone
- Spreading rumors about sexual issues to humiliate or disgrace someone socially
- Discriminating anyone on grounds of gender or sexual-orientation.

## **Making a complaint**

Personal measures

There are several options for students and staff members to follow in addressing a complaint:

- Informing the harasser that the advances are unwelcome and asking him/her to desist.
- Documenting the experience.
- Informing an official, supervisor, Advisor, Proctor or Student Affairs Office.

### **Role of management**

The official, supervisor, Advisor, Proctor or Student Affairs Office is responsible for taking immediate action in dealing with harassment once a formal, written complaint is made. Confidentiality will be maintained in line with the ULAB Confidentiality Policy.

### **Investigation Procedures**

Steps of the complaints process

1. A formal, written complaint should be filed as soon as possible after the incident.
2. The Proctor's Office will forward the complaint to the Sexual Harassment Committee.
  - One member of the Proctor's Office will sit on the Sexual Harassment Committee.
  - At least two members of the Sexual Harassment Committee should be women.
3. The Sexual Harassment Committee will investigate and refer their findings to the Disciplinary Committee.
4. The Disciplinary Committee will initiate a hearing and may seek legal advice as necessary.
5. The Student Affairs Office will maintain a liaison with the ULAB student(s) involved, and sit with the student(s) during Disciplinary Committee hearings. Investigation Guidelines would be the following:
  - In minor incidents, the Proctor's Office can dispose of the matter summarily with the consent of both parties;
  - In all other cases the Sexual Harassment Committee will investigate the matter;
  - The Committee will first discuss/analyze the written complaint;
  - The Committee can call the complainant for meeting for clarification/ further evidence;
  - The offender can be called by the Committee for a hearing and record his version of the incident/allegation;
  - The Committee can seek legal advice if and when required;
  - The Committee will take decision on the basis of the views of majority;
  - The Committee can refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee at any point of the investigation;
  - In case of any false or frivolous complaint, the Committee can recommend disciplinary action/measures against the complainant.

### **Malicious, false or frivolous accusations**

An accuser 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 restraint, interference, coercion or reprisal for action taken in good faith to seek advice concerning a sexual harassment/assault, to file a sexual harassment/assault grievance, or to serve as a witness or a panel member in the investigation of a sexual harassment/assault grievance.

### **Resolving a complaint**

The investigation committee will complete the investigation within 2 (two) 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 staff or student will be supported by the University to report any future incidences of harassment or retaliation.

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

### **Disciplinary measures**

On completion of disciplinary processes, depending on the seriousness of the incident the disciplinary measures may include:

- Written warning
- Demotion
- Transfer
- Suspension
- Dismissal
- Expulsion
- Referral to external legal authorities

The complaint and the results of the investigation will be recorded in the personal files of the complainant and the alleged harasser.

### **The ULAB Commitment**

ULAB strives to ensure a campus culture that is free from sexual harassment. We will continue our commitment to prevent any form of sexual harassment by implementing four general principles:

1. Notifying individuals of conduct that is prohibited
2. Ensuring that all faculty, staff and students are aware of their rights
3. Informing officials about the proper way to address complaints of violations of this policy
4. Helping educate the faculty, staff and students about the problems this policy addresses

### **Training and Education**

The Sexual Harassment Policy will be introduced during student, staff, and faculty orientations. Sexual harassment/ sexual assault prevention training, workshops, and professional development seminars will be made available at no cost to all staff and students.

### **Information Dissemination**

Copies of the Sexual Harassment Policy will be available in the Student Affairs Office, Proctor's Office, the Registrar's Office and on the ULAB Website. Students have the right to view the policy upon request.