

# Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) Policy and Institutional Charter

## 1. Policy Statement and Institutional Commitment

Govind National College, Narangwal, maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy towards any form of sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, or exploitation on its campus. The institution is profoundly committed to providing a safe, secure, inclusive, and empowering academic and working environment for all its stakeholders, including female students, faculty members, non-teaching staff, administrative personnel, and visitors. Sexual harassment is recognized as a grave violation of a person's fundamental rights to equality, life, liberty, and dignity as guaranteed under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Constitution of India.

The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is constituted as a high-level statutory mechanism empowered to prevent, prohibit, and formally redress grievances related to sexual harassment at the workplace. All members of the campus community are legally bound to uphold the principles of this charter, and any contravention shall be met with stringent punitive action up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the institution.

## 2. Legal Framework and Statutory Alignment

This policy and institutional charter are framed in absolute conformity with the following national statutes and regulatory directives:

- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (commonly known as the POSH Act).
- The University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015.
- Directives and ordinances issued by Panjab University, Chandigarh, regarding campus discipline, student safety, and workplace ethics.
- The UGC Guidelines on Public Self-Disclosure by HEIs, 2024, which mandate the prominent web-hosting and transparency of institutional safety cells.

## 3. Statutory Definitions

To ensure legal clarity and enforceability during administrative or quasi-judicial inquiries, the following terms are defined in accordance with the UGC Regulations, 2015:

### 3.1. Aggrieved Woman

Any female individual, irrespective of her age, employment status, or designation, whether she is a regular, contractual, temporary, ad-hoc, or daily-wage employee, or a student pursuing any undergraduate, postgraduate, or certificate program at Govind National College, who alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment by the respondent.

### **3.2. Respondent**

Any person, including faculty members, non-teaching staff, administrative officials, students, researchers, or third-party service providers on campus, against whom the aggrieved woman has lodged a formal written complaint of sexual harassment.

### **3.3. Campus / Higher Education Institution (HEI) Workplace**

The geographic boundaries of Govind National College, Narangwal, encompassing all core academic buildings, lecture halls, laboratories, departmental offices, the central library, administrative wings, playgrounds, sports complexes, hostels, cafeterias, and staff quarters. This definition explicitly extends to any location outside the physical campus visited by students or staff during field trips, industrial visits, educational tours, NSS/NCC camps, cultural or athletic meets, or transport vehicles provided by the institution.

### **3.4. Sexual Harassment**

Includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviors, whether directly committed or by implication:

1. Physical contact and advances involving inappropriate or unwelcome proximity.
2. A demand or request for sexual favors linked explicitly or implicitly to academic evaluations, marks, attendance, or employment benefits.
3. Making sexually colored remarks, jokes, or using derogatory gender-insensitive terminology.
4. Showing, transmission, or display of pornography, obscene images, or explicit digital content.
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature via text, social media, email, or physical actions.

## **4. Mandatory Composition and Tenure of the ICC**

The composition of the Internal Complaints Committee is statutorily mandated to maintain administrative independence and avoid institutional conflicts of interest. The executive committee consists of the following members, formally appointed by the Principal of the college:

Designated Role	Statutory Eligibility Criteria	Seat Allocation Count
<b>Presiding Officer</b>	Must be a senior female faculty member at the level of Associate Professor or Professor from the institution.	1 Member
<b>Faculty Representatives</b>	Teaching staff members dedicated to gender equality, student welfare, or possessing documented legal and social work experience.	2 Members
<b>Non-Teaching Staff Representatives</b>	Administrative, secretarial, or technical office personnel with a clean institutional service record.	2 Members
<b>Student Representatives</b>	Enrolled students (applicable if the matter directly involves or impacts a student). Selection must be transparent and merit/conduct-based.	3 Members
<b>External Independent Member</b>	An outside expert from an NGO, an advocate, or a social worker deeply familiar with the POSH laws, gender rights, and legal inquiry frameworks.	1 Member

**Tenure and Structural Adjustments:** The term of office for all members of the ICC shall be three (3) consecutive years from the date of official notification. At least one-half (50%) of the total members of the committee must be women at all times. Vacancies arising from retirement, graduation, or resignation must be filled within thirty (30) days of the seat becoming vacant.

## 5. Powers and Jurisdictional Mandate

The Internal Complaints Committee functions as a quasi-judicial body within the institution. Under Section 11 of the POSH Act and Section 9 of the UGC Regulations, 2015, the ICC is explicitly granted the **powers of a Civil Court** under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, when inquiring into a complaint of sexual harassment. These powers include:

- Summoning and enforcing the physical attendance of any person (including employees, students, or witnesses) and examining them under oath.
- Requiring the discovery, production, and verification of documentary evidence, including CCTV camera logs, institutional email servers, server database history, attendance logs, and personal devices if directly relevant.
- Recommending immediate interim measures to the administrative head to preserve the safety of the complainant and prevent intimidation or hostilisation of the work and study environment.

## 6. Formal Complaint and Intake Registration Procedure

To initiate a formal intervention by the ICC, the following sequential process must be followed:

1. **Submission of Complaint:** The aggrieved woman must submit a written complaint detailing the incident(s), dates, times, location, names of respondents, and supporting witnesses. The complaint can be submitted physically to the Presiding Officer or transmitted securely via the dedicated email account (icc@gncnarangwal.edu.in).
2. **Statutory Timeline for Submission:** The complaint must be filed within a maximum period of **three (3) months** from the date of the incident, or in the case of a series of incidents, within three months from the date of the latest incident. The ICC may extend this timeline if it is satisfied that exceptional circumstances prevented the woman from filing earlier, provided reasons are recorded in writing.
3. **Support Framework:** Where the aggrieved woman cannot make a complaint in writing due to physical or mental incapacity, her legal heirs, parents, or a designated close associate can register the complaint on her behalf with her explicit consent.

## 7. Formal Inquiry and Redressal Workflow

Upon receipt of a valid written complaint, the ICC will execute the following standard operating protocol to ensure a fair and lawful trial:

Inquiry Stage	Operational Specifications & Protocol Requirements	Statutory Deadline
<p><b>1. Notice Issuance</b></p>	<p>The ICC issues a formal notice along with one full copy of the written complaint to the Respondent, ordering a formal written reply with supporting evidence.</p>	<p>Within 7 Working Days</p>
<p><b>2. Respondent Reply</b></p>	<p>The Respondent must submit an official written counter-statement alongside a list of witnesses and digital/documentary tracking elements.</p>	<p>Within 10 Working Days</p>
<p><b>3. Conciliation Option</b></p>	<p>Before initiating a full court inquiry, the ICC may, at the explicit request of the aggrieved woman, attempt to settle the matter through conciliation. <b>Monetary settlements are strictly prohibited as a basis for conciliation.</b></p>	<p>Prior to Inquiry Start</p>
<p><b>4. Formal Inquiry</b></p>	<p>Both parties are given equal opportunities to present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and review case files. The rules of natural justice are strictly enforced. No legal practitioners are allowed to represent either party.</p>	<p>Must conclude within 90 Days</p>
<p><b>5. Report Submission</b></p>	<p>The ICC compiles its final findings, conclusions, and recommended administrative penalties into an official report, submitted to the Principal and both parties.</p>	<p>Within 10 Days of conclusion</p>
<p><b>6. Execution of Action</b></p>	<p>The College Management or Principal must enforce the recommended penalties or actions unless an official university appeal is active.</p>	<p>Within 60 Days</p>

## 8. Mandatory Interim Relief Measures

During the pendency of a formal inquiry, if the aggrieved woman provides a written request detailing reasonable apprehension of bias, intimidation, or physical harm, the ICC may recommend the following immediate interim measures to the Principal:

- Transfer the aggrieved woman or the respondent to a different department, section, or administrative wing to eliminate physical interaction.
- Grant paid leave to the aggrieved woman for a period up to three (3) months, over and above her standard statutory leave entitlements.
- Restructure the academic class schedule, laboratory groups, or internal examination assignments to ensure the respondent does not evaluate or supervise the student's academic progress.

## 9. Penalties and Punitive Framework

Where the ICC arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the respondent has been proven, it will recommend specific penalties based on the category of the offender:

### 9.1. Punitive Action Against Employees (Faculty / Non-Teaching Staff)

Penalties shall be applied in accordance with service rules and may include:

- Formal written censure, reprimand, and entry into the personal Service Book.
- Withholding of annual increments, promotions, or salary progression.
- Suspension from active service pending further university-level review.
- Compulsory retirement or summary termination of employment services without terminal benefits.

### 9.2. Punitive Action Against Students

Penalties shall be applied in accordance with the campus disciplinary code and may include:

- A formal written warning and mandatory counseling sessions.
- Suspension from attending academic lectures, entering the library, or utilizing institutional infrastructure for a specified semester.
- Debarment from appearing in internal house assessments or university semester examinations.
- Expulsion from the college hostel and rustication from the institution, blacklisting the student from future admissions.

## 10. Protection Against Victimization and Malicious Complaints

**Confidentiality Mandate:** The identity and address of the aggrieved woman, respondent, and

witnesses, any information tracking the inquiry proceedings, recommendations of the ICC, and action taken by the institution \*\*must not be published, communicated, or disclosed to the public, press, or media\*\* in any manner. Section 16 of the POSH Act overrides the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, regarding these parameters. Breach of confidentiality by any member of the committee or administration will result in an immediate penalty of INR 5,000 and institutional disciplinary action.

**Malicious Intent:** If the ICC arrives at a definitive conclusion that the complaint was consciously filed with false, malicious, or fabricated intent, or that the complainant produced forged documents, the committee may recommend the same disciplinary penalties against the complainant as detailed in Section 9. A mere inability to substantiate a complaint or a lack of adequate evidence does not constitute a malicious complaint.

## 11. Annual Reporting Requirements

The ICC is statutorily bound to compile and submit an Annual Compliance Report to the Principal and the Director of Higher Education (DHE) / University Registrar at the end of each academic year. To fulfill the UGC 2024 Self-Disclosure parameters, the following anonymized statistical indicators must be published on the official college website:

- Number of sexual harassment complaints received during the year.
- Number of complaints disposed of within the statutory 90-day framework.
- Number of cases pending for more than 90 days, along with detailed step-by-step reasoning for delay.
- Number of gender-sensitization workshops, awareness seminars, and safety audits conducted for staff and students.

## 12. Ratification and Authorization

This document serves as the governing regulatory standard for the internal management of Govind National College, Narangwal, and remains effective until amended or replaced by subsequent Gazette Notifications issued by the University Grants Commission or Panjab University.