

August 2016

## **I. Online Complaints and Redress Mechanisms for Ragging and SGBV**

### **Purpose**

To establish an online complaints mechanism against ragging and SGBV which can be monitored to ensure that universities respond appropriately.

### **Aims**

- To establish a violence free environment in universities where students and staff can work with security and dignity
- To make sure that there are robust investigations mechanisms for complaints of ragging and SGBV in universities
- To ensure that a robust and effective redress process is established to respond to complaints of ragging and SGBV in universities
- To encourage universities to develop a range of preventative and redress measures to respond to ragging and SGBV in universities
- To ensure that the UGC functions as a preventative, oversight and appeals body for ragging and SGBV incidents

### **What will the online complaint mechanism do?**

Firstly, it will enable students to complain online instead of complaining in person. However this does not debar from complaints being solicited via other modes such as in person, phone, in writing or email. The complaint will go directly to the University focal point for the prevention of ragging and SGBV. Thereafter steps taken to respond to the complaint will be continuously monitored by the UGC until there is a final conclusion of the matter. The UGC will be able to intervene when action within a specified time period is not taken.

### **Structure**

The online complaints mechanism will be managed by the IT division of the UGC. The following will have access to it:

UGC Level:

- UGC Chair

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<sup>1</sup> The mechanism is based on multi-stakeholder discussions held during a series of consultative workshops held in 2016 attended by the Vice Chancellors, Deans of Faculties, Senior Student Counsellors, Proctors, Senior Academics, Directors of Staff Development Centers and members of the UGC.

- UGC Vice-Chair
- Director, GEE Centre

#### University Level

- Vice-Chancellor
- Senior Student Counsellor (for ragging complaints)
- Director, University GEE Centre (for SGBV complaints) /or Chair of relevant Committee or Cell or Unit

#### **Functioning of the Online Complaints mechanism**

1. All complaints should be logged online enabling monitoring and tracking of complaints. Complaints that are made in person will also be logged into the system.
2. When a complaint is lodged, automatic text alerts will be sent to those responsible for responding.
3. Reports tracking complaints will be automatically generated and sent to those identified above who are responsible for monitoring and responding to the complaint as well as to the person making the complaint.
4. Direct complaints can also be made to the Anti-SGBV Desk at the GEE centre – at the UGC and/or at university level for SGBV complaints.
5. UGC will issue quarterly reports on the numbers of complaints and responses in the university system.
6. Mechanisms to ensure confidentiality will be inbuilt into the system.

#### **B. University Complaints and Investigations Mechanism**

##### **1. Function and Role of the University Complaints and Investigations Mechanism**

Each university will be responsible for establishing a complaints and investigations mechanism. This mechanism is expected to ensure the following:

- Dealing with complaints of ragging (as opposed to other issues of indiscipline) at university level as an emergency. The ultimate responsibility for redress for ragging rests with the Vice Chancellor and the Council of the respective University.
- Amending bylaws to strengthen mechanisms to deal with ragging
- Processing complaints within the specified time frames (to be specified by the UGC)
- Ensuring that time frames for each stage of investigation are included and adhered to
- Putting in place witness and victim protection measures immediately, including ensuring personal security of students and staff
- Ensuring that preliminary investigations are completed within three days.
- Ensuring that the overall time frame for completion of investigation is two weeks from the date of complaint
- Ensuring gender parity, diversity, and representation of academic and administrative staff and external members in the investigative mechanism.
- Ensuring that all those associated with the mechanism receive appropriate training.

The following will be clarified:

- Whether the internal process should/could continue parallel with a court case
- Appeal to the UGC by victim or perpetrator or both: – check legal status, particularly in relation to the University Services Appeals Board. Time line for appeals to be specified
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## **2. Non-disciplinary preventative actions**

The following preventative actions will also be recommended and promoted:

- Psychological counselling for both victims and perpetrators
- Psychological review and follow up of serious offenders
- Sensitizing and empowerment of academics in relation to ragging
- Deans and HODs to take more responsibility in the redress to ragging
- Students to sign a legally binding affidavit on registration every year – witnessed by parent/guardian and GN/JP establish accountability mechanisms
- Draft by-laws to ensure prevention of SGBV and ragging [This has already been noted in B1]
- Promote visibility of Champions of actions as persons engaged in prevention work
- Engage and obtain commitment of key stakeholders including parents and student leaders.
- Promote the idea of zero tolerance for SGBV and ragging in Universities and IHE of the UGC
- Regularly publish information on SGBV and ragging on the status of addressing SGBV and ragging highlighting best practices and success stories
- Media and publicity campaigns to promote commitment to a peaceful university environment devoid of SGVBCV and ragging
- Reward schemes
- Link and strengthen prevention and redress to QA
- Integrate training on SGBV to university staff development

## **3. Further action for the Standing Committee on GEE**

The UGC will issue guidelines to support establishing the above mechanisms. The Standing Committee on GEE will prepare these guidelines. The following actions have been identified in this regard:

- Make a list of issues which require guidelines
- Composition of committees, Standard Operating Procedures, training, staffing, emergency hot line, documentation and record keeping, database, mainstream awareness programmes in SDC programmes, mainstreaming gender in undergraduate programmes, research on ragging,
- Develop model guidelines for discussion and adoption by universities.