

PROTECTION AGAINST **Harassment of WOMEN** at the Workplace



In accordance with the "Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (Amendment, 2022)," Virtual University has established an inquiry committee consisting of three members, including

1. [Convener Inquiry Committee](#)
2. [Member Inquiry Committee](#)
3. [Member/Secretary Inquiry Committee](#)

Virtual University aims to create a safe working environment that is free of harassment, abuse, and intimidation to fulfill their right to work with dignity. It will also enable higher productivity and a better quality of life at work. This Act builds on the principles of equal opportunity for men and women and their right to earn a livelihood without fear of discrimination as stipulated in the Constitution. Act and its amendment links are given below:

1. [The Protection Against Harassment Act 2010](#)
2. [The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace \(Amendment\) Act, 2022](#)
3. [The Higher Education Commission Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions](#)

As responsible citizens, staff and students, we must be aware of our rights.

All are advised to read the Act's definition of "Harassment" before launching any complaint. The inquiry committee follows the definition of "Harassment" given in the Act, including but not limited to:

“Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, stalking or cyberstalking or other verbal, visual or written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature or sexually demeaning attitudes, including any gesture or expression conveying derogatory connotation causing interference with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, or the attempt to punish the complainant for refusal to comply to such a request or Is made a condition for employment;

OR

Discrimination on basis of gender, which may or may not be sexual in nature, but which may embody a discriminatory and prejudicial mindset or notion, resulting in discriminatory behavior on basis of gender against the complainant;”

The above is unacceptable behavior in the organization and at the workplace, including any interaction or situation that is linked to official work or official activity outside the office.

Explanation: There are three significant manifestations of harassment in the work environment:

1. **Abuse of authority.** A demand by a person in authority, such as a supervisor, for sexual favors for the complainant to keep or obtain certain job benefits, be it a wage increase, a promotion, a training opportunity, a transfer, or the job itself.
2. **Creating a hostile environment.** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, abusive, or offensive work environment; or any discrimination based on the gender which may or may not be in sexual in nature, but which may embody a discriminatory and prejudicial mindset or notion resulting in discriminatory behavior on basis of gender. The typical "hostile environment" claim, in general, requires finding a pattern of offensive conduct, however, in cases where the harassment is particularly severe, such as in cases involving physical contact, a single offensive incident will constitute a violation.
3. **Retaliation.** The refusal to grant a sexual favor can result in retaliation, which may include limiting the employee's options for future promotions or training, distorting the evaluation reports, generating gossip against the employee, or other ways of limiting access to his/her rights. Such behavior is also a part of the harassment.

The Above Are Unacceptable Behaviors At the Virtual University of Pakistan.

Procedure for Filing A Complaint:

Before lodging a complaint, the complainant shall make himself/herself understand the definition and explanation of harassment (as illustrated above) and only then should file a complaint.

Contents of the Complaint:

1. The complaint may contain:
 1. Comprehensive statement of all facts, with all necessary details relating to an incident of harassment at the workplace;
 2. All documents, evidence, or other supporting material, in whatever form it may be, such as audio, video, or documentary or in any other form;
 3. Names of witnesses; and
 4. Any other material, detail, evidence, or person, which will be relied upon or have any relation with the incident.
2. The complainant shall undertake that information contained in his/her complaint is true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and beliefs.
3. The complaint shall be duly signed by the complainant or if he or she cannot sign shall fix the thumb impression.

Feel free to inbox us at harassment.protection@vu.edu.pk if you face any issue that falls under the domain of harassment, as explained in the Protection against Harassment of women at the Workplace Act, 2010, and Protection against Harassment of women at the Workplace (Amendments) Act, 2022.

You will be heard and protected irrespective of any discrimination, including gender.

Please Remember, Do Not Misuse This Platform. We Protect Everyone's Rights and Dignity.