

Prevention Of Sexual Harassment Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this procurement policy is to ensure that all purchases made by The Archival and Research Project (ARPO) are conducted ethically, transparently, and in compliance with applicable laws and donor requirements. This policy aims to ensure fairness, cost-effectiveness, and accountability in the use of funds.

POSH Policy for ARPO

I. Preamble

ARPO is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all employees, contractors, and fellowship holders free from any form of sexual harassment. This policy outlines the organisation's commitment to preventing and addressing sexual harassment, in compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act).

We are committed to fostering a workplace culture that unequivocally rejects all forms of sexual harassment and promotes gender equality. This policy reflects our unwavering commitment to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all individuals, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of ARPO, including permanent, temporary, contractual, and part-time employees, fellowship recipients, as well as interns, trainees, and any other individuals who work on the organisation's premises or are otherwise associated with its business.

III. Definitions

Sexual Harassment: Any unwelcome act or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) of a sexual nature that:

- Creates a hostile or offensive work environment.
- Interferes with an individual's work performance.
- Affects an individual's employment opportunities.
- Violates an individual's dignity and self-respect.

Complainant: The individual who alleges sexual harassment.

Respondent: The individual accused of sexual harassment.

Internal Committee (IC): A committee established by the organisation to investigate complaints of sexual harassment.

IV. Prohibited Conduct

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- **Physical Contact:** Unwelcome touching, grabbing, or any other form of physical contact of a sexual nature. This includes non-consensual physical contact of any kind, even if not explicitly sexual in nature, if it creates a hostile or intimidating environment.
- **Verbal Harassment:** Lewd comments, jokes, or remarks of a sexual nature; making sexually suggestive remarks about a person's appearance or body; using sexually derogatory language or slurs; making offensive comments about an individual's gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- **Non-verbal Harassment:** Unwanted sexual gestures, leering, displaying sexually suggestive material, or making sexually suggestive sounds. This also includes displaying content that is specifically discriminatory or offensive towards LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- **Psychological Harassment:** Making threats or demands of a sexual nature; stalking or cyberstalking; spreading rumors or gossip of a sexual nature; excluding or isolating an individual based on their gender or sexual orientation.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Demanding or requesting sexual favors in exchange for employment, benefits, or any other advantage related to the workplace or fellowship.
- **Gender-based Discrimination:** Any form of discrimination based on gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, including but not limited to:
 - Unequal treatment in hiring, promotion, or other employment opportunities.
 - Denial of equal access to resources or benefits.

- Creation of a hostile or intimidating work environment based on gender stereotypes or prejudice.
- **Quid Pro Quo Harassment:** Conditioning employment, volunteering opportunities, benefits, or any other organizational decisions on sexual favors or the acceptance of unwelcome sexual conduct.
- **Cyber Harassment:** Using electronic communication (emails, social media, messaging apps) to engage in any of the above behaviors, including sending offensive or discriminatory content related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- **Disclosure of Private Information:** Revealing someone's sexual orientation, gender identity or sexual history without their explicit consent, particularly if done with malicious intent or in a way that could lead to harm, discrimination, or humiliation without their explicit consent, particularly if done with malicious intent or in a way that could lead to harm or discrimination.

VII. Scope of Coverage :

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all individuals associated with ARPO, regardless of their status or location when the harassment occurs, if it is connected to their association with the organization. This includes:

- Conduct within the workplace (including office spaces, project sites, and during work-related travel).
- Conduct at work-related social events or gatherings.
- Conduct in online communication related to work or the organization.
- Interactions between colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, volunteers, interns, consultants, partners, and beneficiaries.

Responsibilities

- **ARPO Leadership:** Is responsible for creating and maintaining a workplace culture that prevents harassment and discrimination, ensuring that complaints are addressed promptly and fairly, and providing resources and support to those affected.
- **Coordinators and Managers:** Are responsible for ensuring a respectful work environment within their teams, addressing any observed or reported incidents of harassment, and promoting awareness of this policy.
- **All Individuals Associated with ARPO:** Are responsible for upholding this policy by treating everyone with respect and dignity, and for reporting any incidents of harassment or discrimination they experience or witness.

V. Internal Complaints Committee (IC)

The organization shall establish an IC to investigate complaints of sexual harassment. The IC shall consist of:

1. A Presiding Officer who shall be a woman employee at a senior level.
2. One woman employee from a different department.
3. One male employee.
4. An external member who is a social worker.

The IC shall be responsible for:

- Receiving and investigating complaints of sexual harassment.
- Providing counseling and support to the complainant.
- Taking appropriate action against the respondent, if the complaint is found to be valid.

VI. Complaint Procedure

Any employee who believes they have been subjected to sexual harassment may file a complaint in writing to the IC.

- The complaint shall be kept confidential and treated with sensitivity.
- The IC shall investigate the complaint promptly and impartially.
- The respondent shall have the opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- The IC shall submit its findings and recommendations to the organization's management.

VII. Remedial Actions

If the complaint is found to be valid, the organization shall take appropriate disciplinary action against the respondent, which may include:

- Warning
- Suspension
- Termination of employment

The organization may also provide counseling and support services to the complainant.

VIII. Prevention

The organization shall take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including:

- Conducting regular awareness programs on sexual harassment.
- Providing training to employees on the POSH Act and this policy.
- Displaying posters and notices on sexual harassment prevention.
- Maintaining a safe and respectful work environment.

IX. Non-Retaliation

ARPO strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against anyone who reports harassment or participates in the investigation process. Any act of retaliation will be treated as a separate offense and will be subject to disciplinary action.

IX. Grievance Redressal

If an employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the IC's investigation, they may file a complaint with the appropriate legal authorities.

X. Review and Amendment

This policy shall be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure its effectiveness.

XI. Dissemination

This policy shall be communicated to all employees through various channels, such as:

- Employee handbooks

- Notices
- Workshops
- Email

XII. Contact Information

Employees may contact the IC or any of the following individuals for assistance:

- Amrutha M
- Vysakh Seluraj

By adhering to this policy, ARPO aims to create a safe and respectful work environment for all employees.

Revision #1

Created 9 October 2025 02:43:24 by Sruthin Lal

Updated 9 October 2025 02:57:06 by Sruthin Lal