

PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT



➤ PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

- Protection against harassment is important not only because it threatens the freedom and conduciveness of the environment at institution. At a more fundamental level. Such conduct is unacceptable because it is violating personal dignity and shall not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- In accordance with the terms of this policy, harassment shall be prohibited and shall constitute a punishable offence under the policy. Quaid-e-Azam medical college affirms that the right of every member of the institution is to study and work in an environment that is free from harassment.
- The goal of the policy is to prevent harassment from taking place and where necessary to act upon complaints of harassment promptly, fairly, judiciously and keeping confidentiality a key for all parties concerned.
- To foster zero tolerance for sexual or any other kind of harassment and to ensure that all complaints of sexual harassment are taken seriously duly investigated with transparency and appropriately addressed
- All administrators, faculty and departmental heads have an obligation to be familiar with and to uphold this policy and its procedures along with informing members of their staff and students about its existence.

2) DEFINITIONS:

(c) **Harassment means—**

any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, stalking or cyber stalking or other verbal, visual or written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature or sexually demeaning attitudes, including any gestures 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

- (i) discrimination on basis of gender, which may or may not be sexual in nature, but which may embody a

discriminatory and prejudicial mind-set or notion, resulting in discriminatory behavior on basis of gender against the complainant;"

Creating a hostile environment means

(ii) 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 on basis of gender, which may or may not be sexual in nature, but which may embody a discriminatory and prejudicial mind-set or notion resulting in discriminatory behavior on basis of gender.

(iii) The typical "hostile environment" claim, in general, requires finding of a pattern of offensive conduct, however, in cases where the harassment is particularly severe, such as in cases involving physical contact or gender-based discrimination, a single offensive incident will constitute a violation."

- **Accused** means an employee or employer of an organization against whom complaint has been made under this policy.
- **Competent Authority** means the authority as may be designated by the management for the purposes of this policy. Here, Principal of the institute, will be the competent authority.
- **Complainant** means a person who has made a complaint to the Inquiry Committee on being aggrieved by an act of harassment;
- **Bullying** means offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behavior, abuse of power and/or unfair punitive sanctions which makes the student feel upset, threatened,

humiliated and /or vulnerable, which undermines the student's self-confidence and/or reduces the student's feelings of self-esteem and self-worth, and which may cause the student to suffer stress.

- **Ragging and /or hazing** means the practice of using rituals and any other acts, conduct or practices by which the dominant power of senior students, former students or alumni, is brought to bear on students who are in any way considered junior by other students. Ragging and /or hazing includes individual or collective acts or practices which include, but are not limited to:
 - o Involvement in physical or psychological assault or threat or use of force or wrongful confinement or restraint
 - o Violating the status, dignity and honor of such students
 - o Exposing students to ridicule and contempt and affect their self-esteem
 - o Verbal abuse and aggression, indecent gestures and obscene behavior
 - o Breaching the confidentiality of any information related to the student (e.g. grades, health issues, fee etc.)

Cyber-bullying

- **Cyber-stalking** is the use of the internet and mobile technology such as email, SMS text, social media or other electronic communications, to stalk and generally refers to a pattern of threatening or malicious behaviors, including communicating a credible threat of harm.
- **Cyber-harassment** usually pertains to unconsented conduct such as threatening or harassing email messages, instant messages, or to social media and blog entries or websites dedicated solely to torment an individual. Cyber-harassment differs from cyber-stalking in that it is generally defined as not involving a credible threat.

JURISDICTION:

This policy applies to the actions by students, faculty, staff and other members such as House officers & residents or third parties such as service providers, visitors when the misconduct occurs:

1. On campus
2. Off -campus
 - (i) the conduct occurs in connection with the college recognized program or activity
 - (ii) conduct may create a hostile environment
3. Using college computing or network resources accessed from off campus location.

MEMBERS OF INQUIRY COMMITTEE

1. Prof. Dr Arif Ahmed Zaidi
2. Prof Dr.Shakela Yasmin
3. Dr. Summaira Hassan
4. Dr. Lubna Sarfaraz
5. Dr. Arshad Babrak

PROCEDURES:

Complainant, who either believe that they have become the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment, should immediately report their concerns through any of the following routes:

- ✓ Report to the Principal
- ✓ Report to the director /coordinator /academic head of their college/department - who will immediately contact committee within 24 hours.

RESOLUTION PROCEDURES:

Informal Resolution

Informal resolution is aimed at bringing together the parties to discuss and resolve the complaint. A student who believes that s/he has been harassed may choose to discuss the matter with the person who has engaged in the behavior and / or request that a member of his / her academic entity act as a liaison for an informal discussion with the involved student or member of faculty so as to resolve the matter.

Formal Resolution

Where a student does not wish to pursue the informal resolution procedure or where the informal resolution procedure is unsuccessful, the formal resolution procedures should be undertaken. Students could lodge a formal complaint with the Principal.

- If a member of faculty or staff receives repeated allegations of offenses against the same individual, but each student making the allegation is unwilling to file a written complaint or appear as a complainant, that member of the University community shall inform the Principal.
- The Student Harassment Policy Review and Investigation procedures shall be used in cases where a student charges another student with harassment or where a student charges a member of faculty with harassment.

The Human Resources "Harassment Policy" shall be used in cases where a student charges a member of staff with harassment.

- The Principal, in coordination with director coordinator / academic head of the student's programme, or, in the case where a staff member is involved, a Human Resources senior manager, shall attempt to make temporary arrangements so that the accused and the complainant do not have to interact during the investigation period.

Retaliation from either party shall be strictly monitored. During the process of the investigation, class and clinic schedules shall be strictly monitored. Any occurrence of retaliation by the accused shall result in suspension from the University.

Procedure for holding inquiry:

The Inquiry Committee, within **03** days of receipt of a written complaint, shall—

- (a) communicate to the accused the charges and statement of allegations leveled against him, the formal written receipt of which will be given;

(b) require the accused within **07** days from the day the charge is communicated to him to submit a written defense and on his/her failure to do so without reasonable cause, the Committee shall proceed ex-parte; and

(c) enquire into the charge and may examine such oral or documentary evidence in support of the charge or in defense of the accused as the Committee may consider necessary and each party shall be entitled to cross-examine the witnesses against him.

- All matters related to the review and investigation of any charge of harassment will be undertaken in strict confidence.
- The Inquiry Committee shall submit its findings and recommendations to the Competent Authority within thirty days of the initiation of inquiry.
- If the Inquiry Committee finds the accused to be guilty it shall recommend to the Competent Authority for imposing one or more of the following penalties:
 - (i) Minor penalties:
 - (a) censure;
 - (b) withholding, for a specific period, promotion or increment;
 - (c) stoppage, for a specific period, at an efficiency bar in the time-scale, otherwise than for unfitness to cross such bar; and
 - (d) recovery of the compensation payable to the complainant from pay or any other source of the accused;
 - Major penalties:
 - (a) reduction to a lower post or time-scale, or to a lower stage in a time-scale;
 - (b) compulsory retirement;
 - (c) removal from service;
 - (d) dismissal from service; and
 - (e) Fine
- The Competent Authority shall impose the penalty recommended by the Inquiry Committee under sub-section within one week of the receipt of the recommendations of the Inquiry Committee

8) COMMUNICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICY

- The Principal, as applicable, in cooperation and coordination with the academic heads, shall be responsible for wide dissemination of this policy.
- The Student Anti-Harassment Policy will be available on the Website.

Support and First Line of Contact

- In the unlikely situation(s) in which the complainant who are victims of an attack (sexual or otherwise) should be able to seek help from the Accident & Emergency Department of Bahawal Victoria Hospital. Designated emergency helpline numbers should be provided to the students and also displayed in public spaces.

- Hostel supervisor's office should be open 24/7 for students and Doctors in QAMC/BVH to make a first contact in case of need.

Appeal against minor and major penalties. –

1) Any party aggrieved by decision of the Competent Authority on whom minor or major penalty is imposed may within **30** days of written communication of decision resubmit an appeal to the Principal of QAMC, Bwp.

COUNSELLING

Student counseling service must be available to students/victims of harassment.

Doctors & Psychologists, Department of Psychiatry, are present 24/7 to facilitate of the students and the employees of the hospital and College if need.

Dr Mussarat Jahan ,FCPS psychiatry, has been nominated by the competent authority as the focal person to address any issues related to the students and employees of the college and hospital.

**Prof. Dr Soufia Farrukh
Principal
QAMC/BVH/FJH**

Reference: Protection against Harassment of Women at work place (Amendment) Act , 2022.

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Title

Protection Against Harassment Policy

Effective Date	January 2026
Review Date	January 2029
Custodian	Administration
Prepared By	Administration / Director Medical Education
Approved By	Principal, QAMC
Applicability	All students, faculty, staff, house officers, residents, postgraduate trainees, visitors, contractors and service providers

1. PURPOSE

Quaid-e-Azam Medical College (QAMC), Bahawalpur is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive, equitable and professional learning and working environment free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, victimization, retaliation, ragging, stalking and cyber harassment.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Protect the dignity, rights, and wellbeing of all members of the institution.
 2. Prevent all forms of harassment and discrimination.
 3. Establish transparent complaint and redressal mechanisms.
 4. Ensure fair, timely, confidential and impartial investigations.
 5. Provide support and protection to complainants and witnesses.
 6. Promote professionalism, mutual respect and ethical conduct.
 7. Foster a safe educational and workplace culture in accordance with PMDC and WFME standards.
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2. POLICY STATEMENT

QAMC adopts a policy of zero tolerance towards harassment in any form.

Every member of the institution has the right to study, teach, train, work and participate in institutional activities without fear of harassment, intimidation, discrimination, retaliation or abuse.

Any act of harassment shall constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Students
- Faculty members
- Administrative staff

- House Officers
- Postgraduate Trainees
- Residents
- Contractual employees
- Consultants
- Visiting faculty
- Visitors
- Vendors and service providers

The policy applies to conduct occurring:

- On campus.
 - In affiliated teaching hospitals.
 - In hostels and residential facilities.
 - During academic, clinical, research, sports and extracurricular activities.
 - During conferences, workshops, field visits and official travel.
 - Through electronic communication systems and social media.
 - Off campus where conduct adversely affects the educational or working environment.
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4. DEFINITIONS

Harassment

Any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal, visual, written, electronic, physical, psychological or sexual conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment

Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, sexually suggestive remarks, messages, gestures, physical contact or conduct of a sexual nature.

Gender-Based Harassment

Conduct based on gender stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice or unequal treatment.

Cyber Harassment

Harassment through electronic means including:

- Social media
- Email
- Messaging applications
- Websites
- Online forums
- Digital images and videos
- Unauthorized recording or dissemination of personal information
- Creation of fake accounts or impersonation

Bullying

Repeated unreasonable behavior that intimidates, humiliates, threatens or undermines an individual.

Ragging/Hazing

Any physical, psychological, verbal or social abuse directed towards junior students or trainees.

Retaliation

Any adverse action taken against a complainant, witness or participant in an inquiry because of their involvement in reporting or investigating harassment.

Complainant

A person filing a complaint under this policy.

Respondent

A person against whom a complaint has been filed.

Competent Authority

The Principal, Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur.

5. ANTI-HARASSMENT INQUIRY COMMITTEE

An Anti-Harassment Inquiry Committee shall be constituted through notification by the Principal.

The Committee shall:

- Receive complaints.
- Conduct confidential and impartial inquiries.
- Review evidence.
- Recommend corrective and disciplinary actions.
- Promote awareness and prevention initiatives.

The Committee shall have appropriate gender representation and may be reconstituted through official notification whenever required.

6. REPORTING MECHANISM

Complaints may be submitted through:

- Principal, QAMC
- Director Medical Education
- Head of Department

- Designated Anti-Harassment Focal Person
- Anti-Harassment Inquiry Committee
- Official institutional email
- Secure online complaint portal (where available)
- Written application

Any departmental head receiving a complaint shall forward it to the Inquiry Committee within 24 hours.

Anonymous complaints may be reviewed where sufficient information is available.

7. INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Where appropriate and with the consent of the complainant, informal resolution may be attempted to resolve minor grievances.

Informal resolution shall not be used in cases involving assault, coercion, threats, repeated harassment or serious misconduct.

8. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Inquiry Committee shall:

1. Acknowledge receipt of complaint within three (03) working days.
2. Notify the respondent of allegations.
3. Obtain a written response within seven (07) working days.
4. Examine documentary and oral evidence.
5. Conduct hearings where necessary.
6. Ensure procedural fairness and confidentiality.
7. Submit findings and recommendations to the Competent Authority within thirty (30) days.

The Committee may proceed ex-parte if a respondent fails to participate without reasonable cause.

9. INTERIM PROTECTIVE MEASURES

To protect involved parties during investigations, the Competent Authority may:

- Modify class schedules.
 - Adjust duty rosters.
 - Change clinical rotations.
 - Restrict contact between parties.
 - Arrange alternative supervision.
 - Provide temporary accommodation where necessary.
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10. CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaints, evidence, proceedings, records and decisions shall remain strictly confidential.

Unauthorized disclosure of information shall constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

11. PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION, VICTIMIZATION AND INTIMIDATION

QAMC strictly prohibits retaliation against any person who:

- Reports harassment in good faith.
- Participates in an investigation.
- Provides information or testimony.
- Assists a complainant.

Retaliation, victimization, threats, intimidation, academic disadvantage, workplace discrimination, coercion or attempts to influence witnesses shall constitute a separate violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.

12. PROTECTION OF WHISTLEBLOWERS AND WITNESSES

Complainants, witnesses and individuals reporting concerns shall be protected from:

- Harassment
- Threats
- Victimization
- Academic disadvantage
- Workplace disadvantage
- Coercion or pressure

The institution shall take reasonable measures to ensure their safety and wellbeing throughout the inquiry process.

13. FALSE OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS

Complaints made in good faith shall not attract disciplinary action even if allegations are not substantiated.

Knowingly false or malicious complaints may result in disciplinary proceedings.

14. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Where allegations are proven, disciplinary measures may include:

Minor Penalties

- Verbal or written warning
- Censure
- Mandatory counseling
- Mandatory training
- Withholding promotion or increment

Major Penalties

- Suspension
 - Removal from administrative responsibilities
 - Reduction in rank
 - Termination of employment
 - Expulsion from academic programs
 - Referral to law enforcement agencies where required
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15. COUNSELING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

QAMC shall provide access to:

- Psychological counseling
- Psychiatric consultation
- Medical support
- Academic support
- Referral services

The Department of Psychiatry and designated support personnel shall facilitate counseling services for complainants, witnesses and, where appropriate, respondents.

Emergency psychological support shall be available when required.

16. AWARENESS, TRAINING AND PREVENTION

QAMC shall conduct regular awareness and training programs for students, faculty and staff regarding:

- Prevention of harassment
- Respectful workplace behavior
- Gender sensitivity
- Professional ethics
- Digital professionalism
- Cyber safety
- Reporting mechanisms

At least one institutional awareness activity shall be conducted annually.

17. RECORD KEEPING

The Inquiry Committee shall maintain confidential records of:

- Complaints received
- Investigations conducted
- Findings and recommendations
- Actions taken

Records shall be securely maintained and accessible only to authorized personnel.

18. APPEAL

Any aggrieved party may file an appeal before the Competent Authority within thirty (30) days of communication of the decision, in accordance with applicable laws and institutional regulations.

19. MONITORING AND ANNUAL REPORTING

The Anti-Harassment Inquiry Committee shall submit an annual confidential report to the Principal containing:

- Number of complaints received
- Nature of complaints
- Status of inquiries
- Awareness activities conducted
- Recommendations for institutional improvement

Personal identities shall remain confidential.

20. POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed every three (03) years or earlier if required by:

- Amendments in applicable laws
 - PMDC requirements
 - WFME standards
 - HEC guidelines
 - Institutional needs
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REFERENCES

1. Protection Against Harassment of Persons at the Workplace Act, 2010 (as amended 2022).
2. PMDC Standards for Undergraduate Medical and Dental Education.

3. WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement in Medical Education.
 4. Relevant Government of Punjab and Higher Education policies.
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