

PARUL UNIVERSITY

Office of the Registrar
June 22, 2024

R/Notification-ADAH/07/2024-25

NOTIFICATION

Sub: Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

Ref: (i) Orders of the President

1. Preamble

Parul University is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, inclusive and equitable environment in which all members of the University community are treated with dignity and fairness.

The University recognises that discrimination, harassment, bullying, exclusion and victimisation undermine academic excellence, workplace wellbeing, institutional integrity and equal participation in University life. This Policy therefore establishes the University's framework to prevent, prohibit and address such conduct across academic, administrative, residential, co-curricular, digital and campus-life settings.

Parul University affirms that every student, employee, applicant, visitor and stakeholder covered by this Policy has the right to study, work and participate in University life in an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and related misconduct.

2. Purpose

- prohibit discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and retaliation in any form;
- promote a respectful, inclusive and safe learning and working environment;
- define key standards of conduct and prohibited behaviour;
- provide broad principles for support, reporting, response and resolution;
- guide responsibilities, awareness, accountability and continuous improvement; and
- support the University's wider commitments relating to equality, diversity, inclusion and ethical governance.

3. Scope

This Policy applies, as relevant, to:

- all students;
- applicants for admission;
- faculty, staff, officers and employees of the University;
- contractual, temporary, outsourced, agency and support personnel;
- interns, fellows, trainees, volunteers and visiting scholars;
- consultants, vendors, contractors, service providers and other third parties working with or on behalf of the University; and
- visitors, guests and participants in University programmes, events, placements, outreach and community engagement activities.

This Policy applies to conduct occurring:

- on campus;
- in classrooms, laboratories, offices, hostels, libraries, sports and co-curricular spaces;

- during University-related travel, fieldwork, internships, placements, meetings, events and outreach;
- through email, messaging platforms, online teaching platforms, social media or other digital environments connected with the University; and
- in any context where the conduct has a real or direct connection to the University or its functions.

4. Definitions

Discrimination: unequal, unfair, exclusionary or prejudicial treatment on the basis of a protected characteristic or on any other ground prohibited by applicable law or approved University policy.

Harassment: unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Bullying: offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or abusive behaviour, including misuse of authority or power, that undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures another person.

Victimisation / Retaliation: adverse treatment directed against a person because they raised a concern, made a complaint, participated in a process, provided information, supported another person in good faith, or were suspected of doing so.

Protected Characteristics / Protected Grounds: include, as applicable and without limitation:

- age;
- sex and gender;
- gender identity or gender expression;
- sexual orientation;
- disability;
- race, ethnicity, caste, colour, nationality or national origin;
- religion, belief or no belief;
- language;
- marital status or legally recognised partnership status, as applicable;
- pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption, parental or caregiving status;
- socio-economic background; and
- refugee, asylum-seeker or migration status, where applicable and lawful.

5. Policy Statement

Parul University does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, exclusion, victimisation or retaliation in any form.

All members of the University community are expected to:

- treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- refrain from conduct prohibited by this Policy;
- support a culture of inclusion and professionalism;
- raise concerns responsibly and in good faith; and
- cooperate with appropriate support, inquiry or resolution processes.

The University shall endeavour to address concerns brought under this Policy in a fair, timely, sensitive and proportionate manner, in accordance with applicable law and approved institutional procedures.

6. Standards of Conduct

- behave respectfully in academic, professional and social interactions;
- avoid language or conduct that demeans, humiliates, intimidates or excludes others;
- not misuse power, position, authority or influence;
- respect personal boundaries and professional expectations;
- contribute to an environment in which concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation; and
- comply with related University policies, codes, grievance mechanisms and conduct requirements.

7. Prohibited Conduct

Conduct prohibited under this Policy includes, but is not limited to:

- direct or indirect discrimination;
- discriminatory exclusion or denial of opportunity;
- verbal, non-verbal, written, visual, digital or physical harassment;
- bullying, intimidation, hostile treatment or abuse of authority;
- humiliating, degrading or offensive remarks, jokes, gestures, communications or conduct;
- persistent unwelcome behaviour, including in digital or online spaces;
- retaliation or victimisation against a person acting in good faith under this Policy; and
- instructing, aiding, encouraging or condoning another person to engage in prohibited conduct.

A single serious incident may amount to a breach of this Policy. Repeated conduct may also amount to a breach, even where each individual incident may appear minor in isolation.

8. Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression and Fair Discussion

Parul University supports lawful academic freedom, freedom of thought and freedom of expression. Nothing in this Policy is intended to prevent legitimate academic inquiry, respectful debate, lawful expression, constructive criticism, fair performance management, academic assessment, or reasoned disagreement conducted in a manner consistent with dignity, respect and institutional rules.

However, freedom of expression or academic debate does not justify discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation or conduct that violates the dignity of others or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

9. Support, Advice and Reporting

Any person covered by this Policy who believes they have experienced, witnessed or been affected by conduct inconsistent with this Policy may seek support or raise a concern through appropriate University channels.

The University shall endeavour to provide access to:

- information on available support options;
- designated contact points or support persons, as may be notified from time to time;
- informal guidance, where appropriate;
- formal reporting mechanisms, where required; and
- referral to other appropriate internal or external resources, where relevant.

The University may notify designated officers, local support contacts, committee contacts, student support channels, grievance channels or equivalent mechanisms to assist with advice, support and reporting.

10. Informal and Formal Resolution

Where appropriate and lawful, concerns may be addressed through informal or formal processes, depending on the nature, seriousness and circumstances of the matter.

10.1 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, and only where suitable in the circumstances, informal options may include:

- seeking advice or support;
- facilitated discussion;
- clarification of expectations;
- agreed steps to stop unwelcome behaviour; and
- referral to support or supervisory channels.

10.2 Formal Resolution

Where the matter is serious, repeated, disputed, unsuitable for informal handling, or where informal efforts have not resolved the concern, the University may initiate or permit a formal process in accordance with applicable rules and procedures.

Formal processes may include:

- written complaint or report;
- preliminary review;
- referral to the appropriate authority, committee, office or disciplinary mechanism;
- inquiry or investigation, where warranted; and
- corrective, preventive, academic, administrative, disciplinary or other appropriate action.

11. Non-Retaliation

Parul University strictly prohibits retaliation, victimisation or adverse treatment against any person who, in good faith:

- raises a concern or complaint under this Policy;
- reports suspected discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- participates in an inquiry, review, complaint or investigation process; or
- supports another person in exercising rights under this Policy.

Retaliation shall itself be treated as a serious matter and may result in appropriate action under applicable University rules and procedures.

12. Confidentiality

The University shall endeavour to maintain confidentiality in relation to concerns raised under this Policy to the extent reasonably possible, and subject to legal, safety, procedural and fairness requirements.

Information shall be shared only with those who need it for support, review, resolution, safety, compliance or related institutional purposes.

13. Malicious or Knowingly False Complaints

A complaint or concern raised in good faith shall not attract adverse action merely because it is not substantiated.

However, a malicious or knowingly false complaint may be addressed under applicable University disciplinary or conduct procedures.

14. Responsibilities

14.1 University Administration

The University Administration, through the Office of the Registrar and/or such other offices, committees, cells or support mechanisms as may be notified from time to time, shall be responsible for overall oversight, coordination and institutional promotion of this Policy.

14.2 Heads of Departments, Units and Offices

- promote respectful and inclusive environments within their areas;
- take concerns brought to their notice seriously;
- respond appropriately and in accordance with applicable procedure; and
- support awareness, compliance and timely referral where needed.

14.3 Faculty and Staff

- model respectful and professional conduct;
- comply with this Policy and related procedures;
- avoid prohibited conduct; and
- cooperate with support, review and resolution processes.

14.4 Students

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- refrain from prohibited conduct;
- cooperate with applicable University processes in good faith; and
- contribute to a safe and inclusive campus culture.

14.5 Third Parties

Vendors, contractors, consultants, service providers and other third parties engaged by or working with the University are expected to comply with this Policy while participating in University-related activities.

15. Training and Awareness

The University shall promote appropriate training, sensitisation and awareness initiatives relating to discrimination, harassment, dignity, respect and inclusive conduct.

These may include:

- student orientation;
- staff induction and training;
- faculty and leadership sensitisation;
- awareness communication and campaigns; and

- role-specific guidance for supervisors, designated contacts, grievance handlers or committee members.

16. Relationship with Other Policies

This Policy shall be read together with related University mechanisms and policies, including, as applicable:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Policy for Persons with Disabilities / accessibility support;
- sexual harassment / POSH-related mechanisms;
- grievance redressal procedures;
- student discipline and staff conduct rules;
- code of ethics or code of conduct; and
- whistleblowing, anti-retaliation and related governance policies.

Where another specific University policy or legally mandated procedure applies more directly to a particular matter, that policy or procedure may also be invoked and followed as appropriate.

17. Monitoring and Review

The University may periodically review the implementation and effectiveness of this Policy by:

- reviewing complaint trends and case patterns, where appropriate;
- assessing awareness and support mechanisms;
- gathering stakeholder feedback, where feasible;
- improving training, procedures and support arrangements; and
- revising the Policy in light of legal developments, institutional needs and best practice.

18. Publication

This Policy shall be made publicly accessible through the official University website or another approved public institutional platform.

By Order


Registrar

To,

- 1) Dean, Doctoral Studies and Research
- 2) Deans of Faculties
- 3) Principals/Directors of Colleges/ Institutes
- 4) Director (IQAC)
- 5) Managing Director (Global), Industrial Collaborations; Academic Strategies
- 6) Academic Directors
- 7) Dean, Students' Welfare
- 8) Controller of Examinations

9) Chief Librarian

10) Director, CDC / PIERC / CIRR / OIA/ AFMC / RDC/ Marketing / CDOE/ EDP / CEC / Alumni Association / Events Cell / Centre for Human Resources Development/ Security/ Physical Education and Sports/ Internship Cell/ Staff and Students Welfare Cell/ ICT Cell/ Learning and Academic Enrichment/ Faculty Updation (CSE/IT/CA)/ CMIE/ Partnerships (Institutes of National Importance)/ SCOPE

11) Chief Finance and Accounts Officer

12) Central Administration

13) Accounts Section

14) Students' Section

15) Head, Central Administration / Accounts / Purchase/ Transport/ MIS / Students' Section

Submitted to,

1. The President

2. Dr.Parul Patel, Vice President (Student Affairs and General Administration) and Chairperson, Admissions Committee, Parul University

3. Dr. Geetika Madan Patel, Vice President (Quality, Research and Health Sciences), Parul University

4. Dr. Komal Patel, Vice President (Medical and Paramedical Sciences), Parul University

5. The Provost