

# Gender Sensitization and Gender Equity Policy

MSRUAS/REG/GSE POL/2017-18



**RAMAIAH  
UNIVERSITY**  
OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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***This Policy entitled "Gender Sensitization and Gender Equity"***

***is applicable to all Faculties of MSRUAS***

***from the Academic Year 2017-18***

***(As per the SRAs of the respective Faculty)***



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## **A. Gender Sensitization and Gender Equity**

### **A.1 Introduction:**

In recognition of the imperative for fostering an inclusive and equitable academic environment, MSRUAS is committed to the development and implementation of a comprehensive Gender Sensitization and Gender Equity policy. This policy serves as a testament to the University's dedication to promoting respect, understanding, and equality among all members of the University community.

### **A.2 Addressing Persistent Challenges:**

Gender-based discrimination, harassment, and disparities continue to pose significant challenges in educational institutions worldwide. In response to these issues, this policy seeks to proactively address and eradicate such barriers within the University, fostering an environment where every individual is empowered to thrive regardless of their gender identity.

### **A.3 Legal and Ethical Framework:**

MSRUAS acknowledges its legal obligations and ethical responsibilities to uphold the principles of gender equality and inclusivity as enshrined in international and national laws and regulations. This policy is designed to align with these obligations and provide clear guidelines for compliance.

### **A.4 Empowering Positive Change:**

Through this policy, MSRUAS seeks to empower individuals to become advocates for gender equality, creating a culture of respect, fairness, and dignity. By fostering awareness, education, and active participation, the University aims to create a community that thrives on diversity, innovation, and excellence.

### **A.5 Statement of Policy**

"M S Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (MSRUAS) is firmly committed to fostering a university environment characterized by respect, inclusivity, and gender equity. The University recognize that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a crucial catalyst for social progress, innovation, and academic excellence. With this commitment in mind, MSRUAS adopts, the regulations outlined by University Grants Commission, New Delhi, issued through their notification dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May

2016, titled ‘**University Grants Commission (Prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students in higher educational institutions) Regulations, 2015**’ including the objectives, responsibilities and other requirements mentioned in the regulations.

The notification and regulations as adopted by MSRUAS are given below:

#### **A.6 Short title, application and commencement**

- a) These regulations may be officially titled as the MSRUAS guidelines for addressing (Prevention, Prohibition, and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students in higher educational institutions).
- b) These regulations shall be applicable to all Faculties of MSRUAS.

#### **A.7 Definitions.**

In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires,-

- a) “Aggrieved woman” means in relation to work place, a woman of any age whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment by the respondent;
- b) ‘Act’ means the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (14 of 2013);
- c) "Campus" encompasses the physical grounds and spaces where MSRUAS and its associated facilities, including libraries, laboratories, lecture halls, residences, auditoriums, restrooms, student centers, hostels, dining facilities, parking areas, outdoor recreational areas, as well as supplementary services such as health centers, canteens, and bank counters are situated. This definition also extends to cover additional locations relevant to the academic and extracurricular activities of MSRUAS, such as field trips, internships, study tours, excursions, temporary work placements, venues for camps, cultural festivals, sports events, and any other instances where individuals are participating in their capacity as employees or students of MSRUAS. This also includes the use of transportation provided for commuting to and from the institution.
- d) "Covered individuals" are individuals who have taken part in activities protected under these regulations, such as filing a sexual harassment complaint, or individuals closely associated

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with someone who has engaged in such protected activities. These covered individuals may include employees, fellow students, or guardians of the person who has experienced the offense."

- e) "Employee" refers to an individual as defined in the Act and, within the context of these Regulations, encompasses trainees, apprentices (or designated by another title), interns, volunteers, teacher assistants, research assistants, regardless of their employment status. This definition also covers individuals engaged in field studies, projects, short-term visits, and camps."
- f) "Executive Authority" means the chief executive authority of MSRUAS, irrespective of the specific title they hold, who holds the overall administrative responsibility for the institution."
- g) "Internal Complaints Committee" (ICC) refers to the committee established by MSRUAS in accordance with sub-regulation (1) of regulation 4 of UGC regulations. Any pre-existing body with a similar purpose, such as the Gender Sensitization Committee Against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH), shall be reorganized as the ICC.

In the latter situation, it is imperative that MSRUAS ensures the proper constitution of such a body in accordance with the specified ICC requirements outlined in these regulations. Additionally, strict adherence to the provisions stated in these regulations is of utmost importance for this body.

- h) "Protected activity" encompasses reasonable acts of opposition to practices believed to be in violation of sexual harassment laws, whether on one's behalf or on behalf of others. Such acts may include participating in sexual harassment proceedings, cooperating with internal investigations regarding alleged sexual harassment practices, or serving as a witness in investigations conducted by external agencies or in legal proceedings."
- i) "Sexual harassment" means -
  - i. "An unwanted conduct with sexual undertones if it occurs or which is persistent and which demeans, humiliates or creates a hostile and intimidating environment or is calculated to induce submission by actual or threatened adverse consequences and includes any one or more or all of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether

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directly or by implication), namely; -

- a. any unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature;
  - b. demand or request for sexual favors;
  - c. making sexually colored remarks;
  - d. physical contact and advances; or
  - e. showing pornography”
- ii. anyone (or more than one or all) of the following circumstances, hether occurring individually or collectively, and when associated with behavior that possesses either explicit or implicit sexual undertones:-
- a. The implied or explicit offering of preferential treatment in exchange for sexual favors, functioning as quid pro quo;
  - b. The implied or explicit use of threats of adverse consequences in the workplace;
  - c. The implied or explicit use of threats regarding the current or future status of the individual in question;
  - d. The establishment of an environment that is intimidating, offensive, or hostile to learning;
  - e. Conduct that involves humiliating treatment, capable of adversely affecting the health, safety, dignity, or physical well-being of the person involved;
- j) "Student" refers to an individual who has been formally admitted and is actively engaged in a program of study, including short-term training programs, at MSRUAS;

However, a student who is in the process of seeking admission to the MSRUAS campus, even before formal admission is granted, will be considered, for the purposes of these regulations, as a student of MSRUAS in cases where any instance of sexual harassment occurs involving such a student;



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Provided that a student of MSRUAS participates in University approved activities outside of MSRUAS, and has a complaint of sexual harassment against any party of another HEI, then the other party will be considered to belong to that HEI

- k) "Third-Party Harassment" pertains to instances in which sexual harassment arises due to actions or oversights or omissions by an external third party or visitor who is neither an employee nor a student of MSRUAS but is present on the campus for a different capacity or purpose.;
- l) "Victimization" refers to any adverse treatment inflicted upon an individual with the implicit or explicit intention of securing sexual favors.;
- m) "workplace" means the campus and premises of MSRUAS including-
  - i. Any department, organization, enterprise, institution, office, subsidiary, or division established, owned, controlled, or primarily financed by funds directly or indirectly sourced from MSRUAS.
  - ii. Any sports institute, sports facility, or sports event location, whether residential or not, used for training, sports-related activities, or competitions within MSRUAS;
  - iii. Any location visited by an employee or student in the course of employment or study, including transportation provided by the Executive Authority for such journeys related to their studies at MSRUAS.

**A.8 Responsibilities of MSRUAS shall -**

- a) When necessary, incorporate the essence of the definitions into its policy and regulations concerning the prevention and prohibition of sexual harassment against both employees and students. Additionally, adapt its ordinances and rules in alignment with the stipulations outlined in the Regulations
- b) Disseminate information about the regulations against sexual harassment publicly and ensure their widespread awareness;
- c) conduct training programs or, if applicable, workshops for officers, staff, faculty, and

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students, as recommended in the SAKSHAM Report (Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programs for Gender Sensitization on Campuses) by the UGC. These programs aim to raise awareness and sensitize participants to the rights, entitlements, and responsibilities outlined in the Act and under these regulations;

- d) take resolute actions against any form of gender-based violence targeting individuals, regardless of their gender, among the employees and students;
- e) publicly affirm its unwavering commitment to a policy of absolute intolerance for sexual harassment;
- f) reinforce its commitment to creating its campus free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation or sexual assault at all levels;
- g) promote awareness regarding the definition of sexual harassment, encompassing both hostile environment and quid pro quo harassment;
- h) incorporate information on the penalties and consequences of sexual harassment in its prospectus and prominently display this information on Notice Boards at strategic locations. Ensure that all members of the institutional community are familiar with the details of the redressal mechanism for complaints related to sexual harassment, contact information for the Internal Complaints Committee, the complaint procedure, and related matters. In the case of any existing body with a similar purpose, like the Gender Sensitization Committee Against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH), reconstitute it as per the requirements for an ICC under these regulations. It is required that such a Body adheres to the provisions of these regulations;

Provided that in the latter case MSRUAS shall ensure that the constitution of such a Body is as required for ICC under these regulations. Provided further that such a Body shall be bound by the provisions of these regulations;

- i) inform employees and students of the available recourse in case they become victims of sexual harassment;
- j) organize regular orientation and training programs for ICC members to equip them to handle

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complaints, oversee the resolution or conciliation process with sensitivity;

- k) take proactive measures to prevent all forms of harassment directed at employees and students, whether originating from individuals in positions of power, hierarchical relationships within MSRUAS, intimate partner violence, peers, or external entities beyond the geographical boundaries of MSRUAS;
- l) assume responsibility for holding individuals guilty of sexual harassment against its employees and students accountable, initiating all required legal proceedings, and implementing mechanisms and redressal systems like the ICC to prevent and combat sexual harassment on its campus;
- m) treat sexual harassment as a misconduct according to service rules and take appropriate disciplinary action if the perpetrator is an employee.;
- n) treat sexual harassment as a violation of disciplinary rules, potentially leading to rustication or expulsion, if the perpetrator is a student;
- o) ensure compliance with the provisions outlined in these regulations, including the appointment of the ICC, within sixty days from the date of these regulations' publication;
- p) monitor the timely submission of reports by the ICC;
- q) prepare an annual status report containing information on the number of filed cases and their resolution and submit this report to the Office of the Registrar;

**A.8.1 Supportive measures**

1. The rules, regulations, or any other governing framework under which the ICC operates shall be periodically reviewed and updated.
2. The Executive Authority of MSRUAS will provide unwavering support to ensure the timely execution of the ICC's recommendations. The ICC will have access to all necessary institutional resources, including office and infrastructure facilities (computers, photocopiers, audio-video equipment, etc.), personnel (typists, counseling, and legal services), and a suitable allocation

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of financial resources.

3. MSRUAS will establish and enforce guidelines for ethical research supervision.
4. MSRUAS will conduct regular semi-annual assessments to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of its anti-sexual harassment policy.
5. Employee Induction Programs shall incorporate sessions on gender in their orientation courses. This shall be across all faculties and disciplines.
6. Orientation programs for administrators at MSRUAS will incorporate a module dedicated to Gender Sensitization and addressing sexual harassment concerns. Regular workshops will be conducted for all segments of the MSRUAS community.
7. It is imperative to maintain an adequate and well-trained security staff, with a balanced representation of female security personnel. Security personnel will undergo gender sensitization training as a condition of their appointment.
8. MSRUAS will give priority to the construction of women's hostels. Recognizing the increasing number of young women pursuing higher education, hostel accommodations are essential, both in urban and rural areas, and at all levels of higher education, offering a level of protection from various forms of harassment.
9. Concern for the safety of women students will not be used as a basis to impose discriminatory rules for women in hostels compared to male students. Campus safety policies will not result in excessive monitoring, policing, or limitations on freedom of movement, particularly for women employees and students.
10. MSRUAS will ensure the availability of gender-sensitive medical practitioners and nurses, including gynecologists, to provide comprehensive healthcare services.
11. The Women's Development Cell in MSRUAS shall be revived and funded to be able to carry out the range of activities required for gender sensitization and remain autonomous of the functioning of anti-sexual harassment committees and ICC. At the same time the cell shall extend its activities to include gender sensitization programmes in consultation with ICC and help to disseminate anti-sexual harassment policy on campuses on a regular basis.

**A.9 Grievance redressal process**

1. Each Executive Authority is responsible for forming an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) that includes a built-in mechanism for gender sensitization against sexual harassment. The ICC shall comprise the following members:-
  - a. A Presiding Officer who must be a senior female faculty member holding a position not lower than that of a Professor, nominated by the Executive Authority;
  - b. Atleast two faculty members and two non-teaching employees, preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge, nominated by the Executive Authority;
  - c. Atleast three students, nominated by Faculty Coordinators
  - d. A minimum of one member, nominated by the Executive Authority, shall be selected from non-governmental organizations or associations dedicated to women's causes, or an individual well-versed in issues related to sexual harassment.
2. A minimum of half of the total ICC members shall be women.
3. Individuals holding high administrative positions at MSRUAS, such as the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Registrar, Deans, Heads of Departments, etc., will not serve as members of the ICCs to ensure their autonomy in operations.
4. The term of office for ICC members shall be three years. MSRUAS may also adopt a system allowing student members to change as needed.
5. The member appointed from non-governmental organizations or associations shall receive fees or allowances for their service on the Internal Committee, as prescribed by the Executive Authority.
6. Where the Presiding Officer or any member of the Internal Committee:
  - a. violates the provisions of section 16 of the Act; or
  - b. has been convicted of an offense or is under inquiry for an offense under any applicable law;

or

- c. has been found guilty in any disciplinary proceedings, or disciplinary proceedings are pending against them; or
- d. has abused their position to a degree that their continued tenure is detrimental to the public interest,

such Presiding Officer or Member, as relevant, shall be relieved of their duties on the Committee. Any vacancy resulting from this removal or any casual vacancy shall be filled through fresh nomination in accordance with the provisions of this section.”

#### **A.10 Responsibilities of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)**

The Internal Complaints Committee Shall:

- a. offer support if an employee or student opts to file a complaint with the police;
- b. establish mechanisms for dispute resolution and constructive dialogue aimed at anticipating and addressing issues through fair and just conciliation, with a focus on preserving the complainant's rights. This approach seeks to minimize the necessity for purely punitive measures, which can exacerbate resentment, alienation, or further conflict;
- c. safeguard the complainant's safety by maintaining the person's confidentiality and providing necessary relief. This relief may include sanctioned leave, relaxation of attendance requirements, or reassignment to another department or supervisor, as needed during the duration of the complaint process. It may also entail provisions for the transfer of the alleged offender;
- d. guarantee that individuals who are victims or witnesses in cases of sexual harassment are not subjected to victimization or discrimination during the handling of such complaints; and
- e. implement measures to prevent retaliation or adverse actions against a covered individual,

whether an employee or a student, because they have engaged in protected activities.

#### **A.11 The process for making complaint and conducting Inquiry**

The ICC shall comply with the procedure prescribed in these Regulations and the Act, for making a complaint and inquiring into the complaint in a timebound manner. MSRUAS shall provide all necessary facilities to the ICC to conduct the inquiry expeditiously and with required privacy

#### **A.12 Process of registration of complaint pertaining to sexual harassment**

An aggrieved individual is required to file a written complaint with the ICC within three months from the date of the incident. In the case of a series of incidents, this period is extended to three months from the date of the last incident.

If, for any reason, the complainant is unable to submit a written complaint, the Presiding Officer or any member of the Internal Committee will offer all necessary assistance to help the person convert their complaint into written form.

Furthermore, the ICC may, provided it provides written justification, extend the time limit by no more than three months if it determines that the circumstances prevented the person from filing a complaint within the stipulated period.

In situations where the aggrieved person is physically or mentally incapacitated or deceased, friends, relatives, colleagues, co-students, psychologists, or any other associate of the victim may submit the complaint on their behalf when the aggrieved person is unable to do so.

#### **A.13 Process of inquiry-**

1. Upon receiving the complaint, the ICC shall, within seven days, provide a copy of the complaint to the respondent.
2. Once the respondent receives the copy of the complaint, they must submit their response to the complaint, along with a list of documents and the names and addresses of witnesses, within a period of ten days.
3. The inquiry must be finalized within ninety days from the date of receiving the complaint. The

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inquiry report, along with any recommendations, must be presented to the Executive Authority of MSRUAS within ten days following the completion of the inquiry. Copies of the findings or recommendations will also be provided to both parties involved in the complaint.

4. The Executive Authority of MSRUAS will take action on the committee's recommendations within thirty days of receiving the inquiry report, unless either party files an appeal against the findings within that timeframe.
5. Either party may submit an appeal against the findings or recommendations of the ICC to the Executive Authority of MSRUAS within thirty days from the date of the recommendations.
6. In the event that the Executive Authority of MSRUAS chooses not to follow the recommendations of the ICC, they shall provide a written explanation for this decision to be communicated to the ICC and all parties involved in the proceedings. Conversely, if the decision is made to adhere to the ICC's recommendations, then a show cause notice, answerable within ten days, shall be served on the party against whom action is decided to be taken. The Executive Authority of MSRUAS shall proceed only after considering the reply or hearing the aggrieved person.
7. The party who has been aggrieved may explore the option of conciliation to resolve the issue. Monetary settlements should not be a foundation for conciliation. MSRUAS will facilitate the conciliation process through the ICC when requested. The emphasis is on achieving a resolution that fully satisfies the aggrieved party, whenever feasible, rather than solely punitive measures.
8. The identities of the aggrieved party, victim, witnesses, or the offender shall remain confidential and should not be disclosed to the public or kept in the public domain, particularly during the inquiry process.

#### **A.14 Interim redressal**

MSRUAS may,

- i. if recommended by the ICC, consider reassigning either the complainant or the respondent to a different section or department to minimize potential risks associated with their contact or interaction;



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- ii. provide leave to the aggrieved party, ensuring the maintenance of their status and benefits for a period of up to three months;
- iii. Restrict the respondent from reporting on, evaluating, or influencing the work, performance, tests, or examinations of the complainant;
- iv. issue warnings to offenders, instructing them to maintain a distance from the aggrieved party. When necessary and in cases of clear threats, restrict their access to the campus;
- v. implement stringent measures to create a safe and protective environment for the complainant, safeguarding them against retaliation and victimization resulting from the act of reporting sexual harassment.

**A.15 Punishment and compensation**

1. Any individual found culpable of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action in compliance with MSRUAS's service rules, should the offender be an employee.
2. In cases where the respondent is a student, contingent upon the severity of the offense, MSRUAS may take the following measures,
  - a. suspend certain privileges of the student, such as access to the library, auditoriums, residence halls, transportation, scholarships, allowances, and identity card;
  - b. temporarily suspend or limit access to the campus for a specified duration;
  - c. expel the student and remove their name from the institution's rolls, which includes disqualification for re-admission if the nature of the offense warrants such action;
  - d. impose rehabilitative penalties, such as mandatory counseling and/or community service.
3. The aggrieved party is eligible to receive compensation. MSRUAS may issue directives for the payment of compensation as recommended by the ICC and approved by the Executive Authority,

with the payment to be recovered from the offender. The determination of the compensation amount will be based on the following factors–

- a. the mental trauma, pain, suffering, and distress experienced by the aggrieved party;
- b. the loss of career opportunities stemming from the incident of sexual harassment;
- c. the medical expenses incurred by the victim for physical and psychiatric treatment;
- d. the income and status of both the alleged perpetrator and victim; and
- e. the practicality of making the payment as a lump sum or in installments.

#### **A.16 Action against frivolous complaint.**

To prevent the potential misuse of provisions aimed at safeguarding employees and students from sexual harassment, it is imperative to establish and publicize measures addressing false or malicious complaints within MSRUAS. If the ICC determines that the allegations are indeed false, malicious, or made with knowledge of their untruthfulness, or if forged or deceptive information is provided during the inquiry, the complainant may face appropriate sanctions as per the provisions outlined in sub-regulation (1) of regulation 10, in the case of an employee, and as per sub-regulation (2) of the same regulation, in the case of a student. It is crucial to note that the inability to substantiate a complaint or furnish sufficient evidence will not automatically lead to action against the complainant. Establishing malicious intent on the part of the complainant shall only occur following an inquiry, conducted in accordance with the prescribed procedure, before any recommended action is taken.

#### **A.17 Additional Guidelines**

In addition to the above guidelines, MSRUAS aims to achieve the following goals:

##### **1. Gender-Balanced Workforce:**

MSRUAS is committed to achieving gender balance among its staff, striving for a minimum male to female staff ratio of 50:50. This proactive approach aims to create an inclusive and diverse work environment reflective of the broader society.

**2. Equity in Leadership Roles:**

The University recognizes the importance of gender diversity in leadership positions. MSRUAS sets a target of at least 30% representation of women in leadership roles across all departments and administrative levels. This goal reflects the University's commitment to equal opportunities for career growth and development.

**3. Amenities for Health and Hygiene:**

MSRUAS is dedicated to providing essential amenities that prioritize the health and hygiene of all staff members. These include, but are not limited to, accessible restroom facilities, sanitary products, and a comfortable and hygienic lactation space for nursing mothers.

**4. Safety and Security at Workplace:**

The safety and security of all employees, particularly women, is paramount. The University maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment or discrimination.

**5. Flexible Work Arrangements:**

MSRUAS acknowledges that achieving a work-life balance is essential for all staff members, including women. The University is committed to providing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options, flexible hours, and part-time opportunities, to accommodate the diverse needs of workforce.

**6. Career Development and Mentorship Programs:**

To empower all employees in their professional journeys, MSRUAS actively promotes career development opportunities and mentorship programs. These initiatives will help women in advancing their careers, build leadership skills, and accessing resources for personal and professional growth.

**7. Equal Pay and Benefits:**

Ensuring equitable compensation and benefits for all staff members is a core principle of MSRUAS. The University conducts regular pay equity assessments to identify and address gender-based wage disparities, striving to provide fair and competitive compensation packages.

**8. Gender Sensitization Training for All:**

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MSRUAS mandates gender sensitization training for all staff members to raise awareness about gender-related issues, promote respectful interactions, and create a more inclusive work environment. These training programs will be regularly updated to reflect evolving best practices.

These policy matters underscore the university's commitment to gender equality, safety, and overall well-being of its staff, emphasizing measurable goals for gender balance and representation in leadership positions while also addressing the fundamental needs and rights of women employees. They also further reinforce the University's commitment to gender equality and inclusivity by addressing work-life balance, career development, equitable compensation, and ongoing education for all staff members.

### **A.18 Conclusion**

In closing, The University reaffirms its unwavering commitment to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable academic environment where all individuals are empowered to thrive, regardless of their gender identity. The University's Gender Sensitization and Gender Equity Policy stands as a testament to the dedication to eradicating gender-based discrimination, promoting respect, and fostering an atmosphere of inclusivity and belonging. The University firmly believes that by collectively embracing these principles, the University can realize the vision of a University community where each member can reach his / her fullest potential, contribute to knowledge and innovation, and together, the University advances not only institution's but also the broader societal goals of equality and progress. This policy serves as both a guide and an invitation to all within the university to actively participate in the ongoing journey toward a more equitable and enlightened future.