

## Policy Against Sexual Harassment

The Policy Journey-

Discussions with educators, researchers, policy makers, sector experts, industry, academies, community groups, engaged citizens and more Consultations with organizations, institutions, associations, and eminent individuals.

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**The Policy Guidelines:** Universal AI Group hereby referred to as Universal AI University is strongly committed to having a workplace that ensures equal employment opportunity and a congenial environment where employees, can work without any inhibition and contribute their best without any fear or favor. This Policy against Harassment (“Policy”) seeks to comply in letter and spirit with “The Sexual Harassment of employees at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013” (“Act”). The definition of employee encompasses males, LGBTQI, females and transgenders keeping in view the orders and awards promulgated by the tribunals and judiciary from time to time.

### Scope of this Policy

The provisions in this Policy shall apply to all Universal AI University employees and to all employees directly or indirectly related to Universal AI University, where Universal AI University has a controlling interest (including those who work on a contractual basis). Everyone is responsible for respecting the rights of their co-workers. This Policy shall be deemed to be incorporated in the terms of employment (or contract) of all employees and shall come into effect immediately.

### Definition of Inappropriate Conduct

For this policy ‘Sexual Harassment’ includes, but is not limited to, sexually determined unwelcome conduct (whether directly or by implication), such as: physical contact or advances, demands or requests for sexual favors, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography, or unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature. Examples of unwelcome conduct that are prohibited by this policy include the following:

- Using any indecent gesture or language, or any act which can be perceived as an insult to the modesty of an employee.
- Written or graphic material, including graffiti, which denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of their sex.

- Sexually suggestive physical contact or behaviour.
- Suggestive, insulting, or obscene comments or gestures.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature including foul or obscene language, lewd, off-colour, sexually oriented comments or sexual jokes or any graphic verbal commentary about an individual's body.
- The display of offensive, suggestive, or sexually explicit objects, pictures, posters, calendars, photographs, graffiti, or cartoons, including, but not limited to, offensive electronic communications or voice-mail messages; access to or displaying of pornographic images through the internet or e-mail.
- Demanding sexual favours in exchange for favourable assignments, promotions, continued employment or promise of continued employment or threats if sexual favours are not provided.

### **How to deal with harassment:**

Step 1: Trust your feelings. If you feel uncomfortable, there is probably a reason. Harassment is unlikely to go away on its own unless you deal with it.

Step 2: Tell the person what he or she did make you feel uncomfortable and that you want it to stop. Sometimes people act in ways that they don't consider harassment and letting the person know may be enough to stop the behaviour.

Step 3: If you don't feel comfortable with Step 2 you can raise the issue with your immediate superior, the internal Complaints Committee or HR.

Step 4: Raise a formal complaint using the harassment complaint procedure with any member of the internal Complaints Committee.

Any of these steps can be used at any time.

### **Universal AI University: Commitment on Preventing Harassment**

Where an employee of Universal AI University is subjected to sexual harassment, as a result of an act by another Universal AI University employee(s), a third party or outsider while on official duty (whether on Universal AI University premises or elsewhere), Universal AI University will take all necessary and reasonable steps to assist the affected person in terms of support and preventive action.

To ensure the effectiveness of its anti-harassment policy, Universal AI University will do the following:

- Organize workshops and awareness programs at regular intervals for sensitizing employees; provide necessary training and orientation programs.
- Provide the necessary support to the Internal Complaints Committees for dealing with any complaints and in conducting an enquiry.
- Assist in securing the attendance of respondents and witnesses before the Internal Complaints Committees.
- Make available any information required to the Internal Complaints Committees, regarding any complaint made.
- Assist the complainant, if she/ he so chooses to file a complaint in relation to the offence under the Indian Penal Code or any other law for the time being in force.
- Treat sexual harassment as misconduct under the terms of employment and initiate action for such misconduct.
- Not publish, communicate, or make known to the public, press or media in any manner, the identity and address of the aggrieved person, respondent, witness, any information relating to conciliation and enquiry proceedings, recommendations of the Internal Complaints Committee under the provisions of the Act. Subject to the above, information may be disseminated regarding the justice secured to any victim of sexual harassment under this Act without disclosing the name, address, identity, or any other particulars calculated to lead to the identification of the aggrieved person and witnesses.
- Make available this Policy on website for information and compliance by employees.
- Monitor the timely submission of reports by the Internal Complaints Committees.

— The future is here —

### **Internal Complaints Committees**

An Internal Complaints Committee shall be formed by the competent authorities and notified to all employees. The role of the Internal Complaints Committee shall be solely to handle issues relating to sexual harassment. As per the Act, Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) shall be constituted to consist of the following members:

- (a) A Presiding Officer who shall be a senior level woman employee.
- (b) Not less than two members from among employees, preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge.
- (c) One member from among Non-Governmental Organizations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment.

The member appointed from amongst the NGOs or associations in terms of clause (c) above will be paid fees or allowance for participating in the proceedings of the Internal Complaints Committee as prescribed from time to time. The competent authorities at Universal AI University may alter

the nature and composition of the Internal Complaints Committees, subject to the above guidelines and notify the same to employees from time to time.

### **Reporting of Complaints**

Universal AI University encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have been the victims of conduct prohibited by this Policy or believe they have witnessed such conduct can discuss their concerns with their immediate superior, the HR Team, or with any member of the relevant Internal Complaints Committee.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action. Universal AI University strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against employees for exercising their rights under this Policy. This includes retaliation against employees for inquiring about their rights, or for making a good faith complaint or report of a violation or possible violation, or for truthfully assisting in a complaint investigation.

*However, if, after investigating any complaint of harassment or unlawful discrimination, the competent authorities of Universal AI University would determine that the complaint was not made in good faith or that an employee has provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action will be taken against the individual who filed the bad faith complaint or witness who gave the false information, as per Universal AI University disciplinary policies.*

### **Complaint and Investigation Procedure:**

Any employee who experiences sexual harassment should report the incident either in writing or orally to his/her immediate superior, the HR Team, or any member of the Internal Complaints Committee as soon as possible after the incident.

The relevant Internal Complaints Committee will either (a) help the employee resolve the matter informally, or (b) initiate a formal investigation depending on the wishes of the employee.

The informal procedure, though less stringent than a formal investigation, will be conducted in the full spirit of this Policy and if the issue is resolved, a written record of the resolution will be provided to HR. A copy of the agreed resolution will be provided to both the parties. If the parties are unable to resolve the complaint informally the matter will be subject to a formal investigation.

The formal investigation will take the form of verbal hearings with the parties, which are recorded in writing. The parties will be allowed to put forth their views on the complaint and provide any additional evidence. While investigating any complaint of inappropriate conduct, the relevant Internal Complaints Committee shall ensure that the principles of

natural justice such as opportunity to be heard and impartial treatment are adhered to. If the Internal Complaints Committee decides that the appropriate information is to be provided to local police, then the Internal Complaints Committee will do so within 7 days of receipt of the complaint. The Internal Complaints Committee shall investigate the complaint; prepare the report with the recommendations and actions to be taken against the offender, if any, within six (6) weeks of receipt of the complaint. A copy of the report with the recommendation will be provided to both the parties.

If the investigation reveals that the complaint was valid, prompt action designed to stop the harassment immediately and to prevent its recurrence will be taken. Any employee who is determined to have committed harassment or retaliation in violation of this Policy will be subjected to appropriate corrective and disciplinary action. Appropriate action may range from counselling to termination of employment or prosecution, depending on the circumstances.

The Internal Complaints Committee will hold meetings and maintain records of all complaints received, date when the process began, procedure followed and date of closure. The Internal Complaints Committee will also prepare an Annual Report and submit the same to the HR and to the competent authorities to file before the relevant authority as required under the Act.

#### **Conclusion:**

On any aspect not specifically mentioned in this policy, the relevant provisions of the Act shall apply. In the event of any conflict, ambiguity or inconsistency between this Policy and the Act or any other applicable law on any issue, this Policy shall be suitably amended and modified in a manner to ensure that the stipulations as provided under the Act are captured adequately.

Universal AI University has developed this Policy to ensure that all its employees can work in an environment free from unlawful harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. This Policy should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, or any other protected characteristic, from participating in business or work-related activities. In other words, no one should make the mistake of engaging in discrimination or exclusion to avoid allegations of harassment. The law and the policies of Universal AI University prohibit disparate treatment based on sex or any other protected characteristic, regarding terms, conditions, privileges and perquisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination and retaliation are intended to complement and further those policies, not to form the basis of an exception to them.