

# STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT: INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR THE LUMS COMMUNITY

A guide to basic terms, policies, and procedures regarding sexual harassment at LUMS

Sexual Harassment Inquiry Committee  
Office of Accessibility and Inclusion  
[harassment@lums.edu.pk](mailto:harassment@lums.edu.pk)

## Key Terms: Harassment, Power, and Consent

### *What is sexual harassment?*

Sexual harassment takes many forms but generally includes **unwanted, uninvited, and unwelcome** behavior of a sexual nature that makes the recipient feel uncomfortable, intimidated, or unsafe. It includes gestures and comments, inappropriate jokes or unwanted flirtation, unwanted physical contact or emotional coercion, sharing pictures and videos of a sexual or otherwise inappropriate nature, directly asking for romantic or sexual contact, and other forms of verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.

### *What is the role of power?*

Sexual harassment often (but not necessarily) involves a **power dynamic**, for instance between a supervisor and employee, a teacher and a student, or junior and senior colleagues. These cases may involve an exchange for some benefit or some threat of harm, or they may simply take advantage of the power dynamic to create or condone an environment of harassment. Unfortunately in such cases not only is the power dynamic help create a space conducive to harassment, but may also make it more difficult to report.

### *What is consent?*

Consent to romantic or sexual activity **must be clearly communicated and mutually agreed upon**. If there is any doubt about consent, participants should stop and confirm that they have consent. Without consent, any sexual behavior could be sexual harassment or sexual assault.

Consent:

- **Must never** be assumed based on clothing, appearance, or previous behavior
- **Cannot** be obtained under coercion or threat
- **Cannot** be given by an intoxicated or unconscious person
- **Can** be withdrawn at any time

## Sexual Harassment Inquiry Committee: Background and Procedures

The members of the LUMS community are governed both by LUMS' own harassment policy as well as the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010. The Sexual Harassment Inquiry Committee (SHIC), which is housed in the Office of Accessibility and Inclusion, follows the rules and guidelines outlined by these two. It is comprised of seven faculty and staff members who work together to investigate complaints.

A victim of sexual harassment has the right to bring either an informal or a formal complaint to the committee. Informal complaints are usually resolved through mediation, while formal complaints can include penalties from community service and mandatory counseling to expulsion or ban from campus, depending on the particular circumstances.

The SHIC works to resolve cases as quickly as possible, and ideally (assuming full cooperation of all parties) within 30 days. The usual procedures for a formal complaint look something like this:

- The complainant first fills out the official sexual harassment complaint form and questionnaire and submit it to [harassment@lums.edu.pk](mailto:harassment@lums.edu.pk). Along with the form, they should provide as much relevant evidence as possible, such as text communication, photos, or videos, that document the harassment or its impact, as well as a list of potential witnesses to the harassment.
- The SHIC will contact the accused and inform them of the complaint, and request they respond to the charges. The accused can provide their own evidence or witnesses and a written formal
- The SHIC will gather as much evidence and witness testimony as possible. Both the complainant and accused will be given a chance to respond to the evidence and testimony presented by the other side.
- After reviewing all the evidence and testimony and consulting among themselves, the committee provides their decision to all parties and their relevant departments on campus (e.g. HR, Dean of Students). If there are any penalties these are carried out.

## **Making a Formal Complaint: Things to Know**

- An informal complaint can be turned into a formal complaint at any time.
- Both the complainant and accused can appoint a representative to support them throughout the proceedings. This person need not be a lawyer, they can be a family member or close friend.
- A case cannot be filed on someone else's behalf.
- During an inquiry, involved parties are under a no contact order and must not communicate with each other, even indirectly or through a third person.
- In a formal complaint, all interviews take place under oath, and any party may face disciplinary consequences for lies or misrepresentation in these interviews.

- During interviews, at least three members of the Committee will be present, including at least one woman. An interviewee can request only male or only female Committee members to be present if desired.
- All parties (the Committee, the complainant, witnesses, the accused, representatives) are bound by strict confidentiality regarding evidence and testimony, and breaching this confidentiality can result in disciplinary consequences.

## **Appealing the Committee's Decision**

Under the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, both the complainant and the accused can appeal the Committee's decision, either to the Punjab Ombudsperson or the Federal Ombudsman for Protection Against Harassment. Both of these can hear or review cases involving LUMS personnel and then can uphold or reverse the decision of the LUMS Committee. The case can then be appealed once more; the Provincial Ombudsman's decision can be set aside by the Governor of Punjab, while the Federal Ombudsman's decision can be set aside by the President.

Find out more at: <https://ombudsperson.punjab.gov.pk/> and at <http://www.fospah.gov.pk/>