



SHEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON HARASSMENT, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAFF and STUDENTS

1.0 PURPOSE

This policy sets out the expectations and procedures for addressing incidents of harassment, sexual misconduct, and inappropriate relationships between staff and students. The objective of this policy is to promote a safe, respectful environment that fosters academic and professional integrity among staff and students.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to School of Higher Education Ltd staff, faculty, administrators, contractors, and students in all contexts, whether it be on-campus, online, during school related activities, and off-campus events related to the school operation and organized activities.

3.0 POLICY AND PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

3.1 Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

- The institution has zero tolerance for harassment and sexual misconduct in any form.
- All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and fairly
- Retaliation against individuals who report such incidents or participate in investigations is strictly prohibited

4.0 DEFINITION

Harassment: Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of any individual, which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Sexual Misconduct: Any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature including sexual assault, harassment, coercion, or exploitation.

Intimate Relationship: A romantic or sexual relationship.

Staff: Any individual employed by or contracted to work with the institution.

Student: Any person enrolled in any programme, course, or training activity at the institution.

4.1 Example of Misconduct and Sexual Harassment:

Unwelcome sexual advances:

This can include verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature that are unwanted and create a hostile environment.

Requests for sexual favors:

This involves pressuring someone for sexual acts in exchange for benefits or to avoid negative consequences.

Sexual Exploitation:

This involves the act of abuse of position, power or trust, for sexual purposes in order to gain, benefit for whatever advantages from the sexual exploitation of another.

Offensive or derogatory comments:

This includes making sexually suggestive jokes, verbal, non-verbal, written/graphic, using derogatory language, or spreading rumors of a sexual nature.

Stalking:

This involves unwanted and repeated attention, threats, or harassment that causes someone to fear for their safety.

5.0 Intimate Personal Relationships Between Staff and Students

SHEL prohibits staff and students from engaging personal, romantic or sexual relationships over whom they have direct or indirect academic, supervisory, evaluative, or support relationship exists.

Where relationships occur:

- Where a prior consensual relationship exists before a student is enrolled or before a staff member is hired, the relationship must be mandatorily declared immediately to HR or. Appropriate safeguards will be implemented to manage potential conflicts of interest.
- Reassignment of academic responsibilities
- Mandatory risk assessment

Failure to disclose such relationships may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

6.0 PROCEDURES**6.1 Reporting Mechanisms**

Reports of harassment or sexual misconduct can be made confidentially to:

1. The Human Resources Department
2. Student Affairs Officer
3. Reports may also be submitted anonymously through the institution's official reporting platform.
4. Confidential Hotline

Reports are triaged within 48 hours. Students can track status updates securely online.

6.2 Incident Response Process

- Initial assessment within 5 working days
- Formal investigation within 30 working days

- Findings reviewed by independent panel
- Communication of outcomes to all directly impacted
- Clear appeal mechanism within 10 days of outcome notice

6.3 Investigation Process

1. An impartial investigation team will be appointed.
2. Both complainant and respondent will be interviewed, along with relevant witnesses.
3. The investigation will follow due process and conclude within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., 30 days).
4. Findings and recommended actions will be communicated in writing to both parties.

Decisions are made on the balance of probabilities, ensuring fairness and freedom of speech are upheld.

7.0 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If the investigation confirms a policy violation, disciplinary measures may include:

1. Formal warning
2. Mandatory training or counseling
3. Suspension or demotion
4. Termination of employment or expulsion

8.0 SUPPORT SERVICES

SHEL provide comprehensive support to affected parties via the **Student Affairs Office**, including:

1. Counseling services
2. Academic adjustment for affected students
3. Support of complainants, respondents, and witnesses
4. Legal or external support resources (accompaniment during investigations and hearings).

9.0 FREEDOM OF SPEECH PROTECTIONS

SHEL maintains a strong commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech. This includes:

- Clear guidance that course content and expression of ideas in academic settings are not considered harassment unless objectively offensive and targeted
- Investigators and decision-makers trained on freedom of speech principles

10.0 BAN ON NDAs IN HARASSMENT CASES

SHEL bans the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in any case involving a student allegation of harassment or sexual misconduct. This applies retrospectively and prospectively from September 2024.

11.0 TRAINING

11.1 Mandatory Student Training

Training is delivered during induction and available online year-round

All incoming students must complete training modules covering:

- What constitutes harassment & sexual misconduct
- Understanding sexual consent
- How to intervene as a witness
- How to report incidents
- Available support systems

11.2 Mandatory Staff Training

All staff complete annual training on:

- Recognising harassment and sexual misconduct
- Supporting students appropriately

Staff involved in handling complaints receive enhanced training on:

- Freedom of speech principles
- Trauma-informed investigations
- Procedural fairness

12.0 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

SHEL commits to:

- Annual campus-wide surveys on harassment/sexual misconduct
- Publish anonymous data yearly
- Conducting annual student consultations
- Regular review of processes via independent audits

The approach is iterative, data-informed, and transparent.

13.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

All information related to a report or investigation will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality, shared only on a need-to-know basis.

14.0 REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as needed to reflect changes in law, best practices, and institutional standards.

Attached to this policy and procedures are the SHEL Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Incident Report Form and the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Incident Data Collecting Form.

Title:	Policy and Procedure for Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Intimate Relationships Between Staff and Students
Current Status:	Version 1
Approved by Board of Directors	Yes
Approval Date:	
Next Review Date:	As necessary