



AISSMS

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

IMPARTING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Approved by AICTE & PCI New Delhi, Recognized by the Government of Maharashtra,
2F,12B recognition by UGC, Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University
Accredited by NAAC with A Grade



Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC)

The Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) of AISSMS College of Pharmacy was set up in 2019 as per the 'Guidelines for scheme of Equal Opportunity Centre for Colleges XII plan (2012-2017)' of the UGC. This cell works towards prevention of discrimination in the College. Discrimination in any form is in violation of the basic principles of Human Rights and even Constitutional values and obligations. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaims, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Consequently, the EOC at AISSMS College of Pharmacy tries to ensure that students, faculties and all other stakeholders of the College belonging to diverse backgrounds are not deprived of their basic opportunities and rights.

Objective

The objective of the EOC is to promote inclusivity based on equality and to eliminate any form of discrimination among any section. The cell provides effective guidance regarding academic, social, financial and other matters. If there are any grievances relating to any form of discrimination or harassment regarding the weaker sections of the society, they are addressed promptly and adequately.

Functions

The primary functions of the EOC, according to the UGC guidelines, and as specified in the letter of the Secretary, UGC, dated 26 January 2016, are:

- To ensure equity and equal opportunity to the community at large in the college and bring about social inclusion.
- To enhance the diversity among the students, teaching and non-teaching staff population and at the same time eliminate the perception of discrimination.
- To create a socially congenial atmosphere for academic interaction and for the growth of healthy interpersonal relationships among the students coming from various social backgrounds.
- To make efforts to sensitize the academic community regarding the problems associated with social exclusion as well as aspirations of the marginalized communities.
- To help individuals or a group of students belonging to the disadvantaged section of society to contain the problems related to discrimination.
- To look into the grievances of the weaker section of society and suggest amicable solution to their problems.
- To disseminate the information related to schemes and programmes for the welfare of the socially weaker section as well as notifications/memoranda, office orders of the Government, or other related agencies/organizations issued from time to time.
- To prepare barrier free formalities/procedures for admission/ registration of students belonging to the disadvantaged groups of society.



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- To establish coordination with the Government and other agencies/organizations to mobilize academic and financial resources to assist students of the disadvantaged groups.
- To organize periodic meetings to monitor the progress of different schemes.
- To adopt measures to ensure due share of utilization by SC/ST in admissions, recruitments (teaching and non-teaching posts) and to improve their performances.
- To sensitize the college on the problems of SC/ST and other disadvantaged groups.

Operational/ Complaint Mechanism or Procedures

The EOC has to fulfill its mandate of maintaining social harmony among various sections of the University. Whenever any case of social discrimination is brought before the EOC, it is thoroughly investigated and examined and suitable action is recommended. Addressing of issues related to any social discrimination faced by students or employee at any level is amongst the principal objectives of the EOC.

An employee or student who believes that he or she has experienced unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, bullying or victimisation may make a complaint. Discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimization may be regarded as serious misconduct or misconduct (employee) or general misconduct (students) and may result in disciplinary action.

Reporting

Any administrator, faculty member, or other person in a position of authority who receives a complaint of discrimination or harassment must fully report the information or complaint to the EOC promptly. A complaint or report of discrimination or harassment made to any administrator, faculty member or other person in a position of authority generally obligates the college to investigate the incident and take appropriate steps to address the situation. The responsibility to investigate rests with the EOC and not with the employee who receives the complaint or report. Failure to promptly report may constitute a violation of the EOC Policy.

Violation of Policy

Standard of Proof

Investigative findings under this policy will be made using the preponderance of the evidence standard (i.e., "more likely than not"). This standard requires that the



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information supporting an alleged violation be more convincing than the information in opposition to it.

Interim Protective Measures

The Provost or his/her designee or EOC coordinator may impose interim protective measures before the final outcome of an investigation if failure to take the interim measures would constitute a threat to the safety and well-being of the complainant or other employees or students of the University. Imposing interim protective measures does not indicate that a violation of this Policy has occurred.

These interim measures may include but are not limited to:

- Issuance of a “no contact” directive;
- Restrictions or bars to entering certain college property;
- Changes to academic or employment arrangements, schedules or supervision;
- Interim suspension; and
- Other measures designed to promote the safety and well-being of the parties.

In imposing interim measures, the EOC coordinator will attempt to minimize the burden on both the alleged victim and respondent. Any party may appeal interim measures in writing to the Provost within two working days of the party’s receipt of the notification of the restriction. All interim protective measures will remain in effect during the appeal and thereafter unless modified by the EOC coordinator or Provost or overturned by the Provost.

Initiating an Investigation

As part of any investigative process, the investigator will:

- Provide a copy of this Policy to the complainant;
- Determine whether the complaint is one that falls under the Policy or not;
- Inform the respondent of the complaint brought against him/her and provide a copy of this Policy.

Informal Process

The informal process is an opportunity to bring resolution to a complaint through awareness, education, and/or a facilitated discussion. Informal resolution may be appropriate if the complainant, respondent and EOC coordinator or his or her designee



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all agree.

During an informal process, fact-finding occurs to the extent necessary to resolve the conflict and protect the interest of the parties and the college, but the EOC coordinator or his or her designee does not make a determination of whether the Policy has been violated. The complainant or respondent always has the option to end the informal process and request a formal process.

Informal resolutions may include, but are not limited to:

- Training;
- Changes to work or academic arrangements;
- Informal discussion with person whose conduct, if not stopped, could rise to the level of discrimination or harassment;
- Advisory discussion with the respondent's professor or advisor;
- "No contact" directive to one or more of the parties; and
- Suspension.

Formal Process

All complaints that are not resolved through the informal process are resolved through a formal process involving a full investigation conducted by the EOC coordinator or his/her designees.

As part of the formal process, the investigator will:

- Inform complainant, alleged victim, and respondent of their right to be interviewed and provide evidence;
- Obtain information and evidence, including the identity of any witnesses, from the complainant and the respondent;
- Attempt to obtain information from the identified witnesses;
- Collect and maintain appropriate documentation;
- Disclose appropriate information to others only on a need-to-know basis consistent with state and central law; and
- Keep the appropriate administrators/faculty informed of the status of the complaint and investigation, and seek input from them as appropriate when implementing any resolution or discipline.

Interviews with the investigator constitute the hearing.



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Resolution

The amount of time needed to conduct an investigation will depend in part on the nature of the allegation(s) and the evidence to be investigated (e.g., the scope of the allegations, the time period and number of events implicated by or relevant to the complaint, the number or availability of witnesses involved and the volume of documents). Within 60 working days of receipt of the complaint, the EOC coordinator or his/her designee will provide notice of the outcome of the investigation or will advise the parties of the additional estimated amount of time needed for the investigation. Upon conclusion, EOC coordinator or his/her designee will notify the complainant and respondent, in writing, of the results of the investigation. The written decision will be disclosed only to the complainant, respondent, and college officials as appropriate to determine and enforce any remedial actions, discipline or sanctions, and to prepare for any appeals. The EOC coordinator will follow up as appropriate to ensure that remedial action is effective. Complainants are encouraged to report any reoccurrences of conduct that were found to violate this Policy, as well as to report any retaliation for the complaint or related investigation. Remedial and preventative measures may be imposed by the EOC coordinator even in the absence of a violation of this Policy if conduct is found to occur that may, if not addressed, rise to the level of a violation. Any unprofessional conduct or inappropriate behavior found during the course of the investigation that is not covered by the Policy will be addressed with the respective department or Human Resources department.

Remedies

Where discrimination or harassment in violation of this Policy is determined to have occurred, the college will take timely action to remedy the effects. Potential remedies for the complainant or victim include, but are not limited to:

- Extensions of time to re-do or complete academic work without an academic or financial penalty;
- Changes to academic or employment arrangements, schedules or supervision that minimize burden on the complainant or victim;



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- Referral to medical, counseling, and academic support services;
- Training/re-training on this Policy and other relevant topics for individuals or groups implicated in the discrimination or harassment; and
- Other measures designed to repair negative impact of discrimination or harassment.

Sanctions

If a violation of this Policy is found, the level of disciplinary action and type or scope of sanctions will depend on the severity and nature of the discrimination or harassment, the weight of the evidence, and the need to maintain a safe and respectful environment.

Available sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Mandatory training or counseling;
- “No Contact” directive;
- Restriction or bar to entering certain college property or attending college events;
- Written warning;
- Transcript notation;
- Probation;
- Suspension; and
- Expulsion or termination.

Right to Appeal

All parties shall have the right to appeal the outcome of the formal process and decision to the college Provost pursuant to this Policy. The Provost must receive a written appeal within ten (10) working days after the receipt of the written notification of the decision being appealed. The Provost or his/her designee may receive additional information if he/she believes such information would aid in the appeal.

The Provost may overturn or modify a finding or sanction if, in his or her reasonable discretion, he or she finds any of the following factors had a material impact on the finding or sanction:

- Material failure to comply with applicable procedures in EOC Policy or to conduct a reasonably thorough investigation;
- Partiality, bias, or conflict of interest by the EOC Coordinator or his/her designee;
- Findings, if not overturned or modified, would result in a substantial injustice to a party or parties, including a substantially inadequate or excessive sanction; or



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- New evidence that was not reasonably available to be presented by the parties during the course of the investigation.

A decision by the Provost or his/her designee will be made within a reasonable time and the EOC Coordinator, the complainant, and the respondent will be notified in writing of the decision on the appeal. During the time of appeal and review, disciplinary action or sanction or remedial/preventative measures, if any, taken as a result of the original complaint may be implemented and enforced. Upon the request of the appealing party, the Provost may, in his or her discretion, temporarily suspend the imposition of the disciplinary action, sanction, or remedial/preventative measures while the appeal is pending. If an appeal is not filed within the appeal period, the findings become final and are not subject to any review.

Review and Monitoring of Policy

The college may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any employee or student who wishes to make any comments about this Policy may forward their suggestions to the EOC.

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