



HESTER

Hester Biosciences Limited

Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace

HQ AND REGISTERED OFFICE

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A. OBJECTIVE:

HESTER BIOSCIENCES LIMITED ("the Company") is committed to an equal employment opportunity provider, by not discriminating against the employees on the grounds of gender and providing a safe working environment to all its employees.

B. SCOPE:

This Policy is framed in accordance with The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the rules framed thereunder ("POSH Act"), and covers complaints by all categories of women for sexual harassment at the workplace (as defined under the Act) in the context of the Company, including permanent and temporary employees, trainees, visitors, employees on contract etc. This Policy is applicable with effect from 30 May 2014, being the date of approval of the policy by the Board of Directors in their meeting, and extends to all Employees (defined below) of the Company and its Indian subsidiaries ("**the Group**") and is deemed to be incorporated in the service conditions of all Employees of the group.

C. IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:

1. Sexual Harassment: "Sexual Harassment" includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour, whether directly or by implication, but not limited to:
 - 1) Any unwelcome sexually determined behaviour or pattern of conduct, that would cause discomfort and/ or humiliate a person at whom the behaviour or conduct was directed namely:
 - a. Unwelcome sexual advances involving verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct, whether implicit or explicit;
 - b. Physical contact and advances including (but not limited to) touching, stalking, sounds which have explicit and /or implicit sexual connotation/overtones, molestation;
 - c. Teasing, voyeurism, innuendos and taunts with implicit sexual connotation, physical confinement;
 - d. Demand or request for sexual favours;
 - e. Sexually coloured remarks or remarks of a sexual nature about a person's clothing or body;
 - f. Display of pictures, signs etc. with sexual nature/ connotation/ overtones in the work area and work- related areas;
 - g. Showing pornography, making or posting vulgar/ indecent/ sexual pranks, teasing, jokes, demeaning or offensive pictures, cartoons or other materials through email, SMS, MMS, gestures etc.;
 - h. Repeatedly asking to socialise during off-duty hours or continued expressions of sexual interest;
 - i. Giving gifts or leaving objects that are sexually suggestive;
 - j. Eve teasing, physical confinement against one's will or any such act likely;
 - k. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature;
 - 2) The following circumstances if it occurs or is present in relation to any sexually determined act or behaviour amount to Sexual Harassment:
 - a. Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment;
 - b. Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in employment;
 - c. Implied or explicit threat about the present or future employment status;
 - d. Interference with the person's work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work;
 - e. Humiliating treatment likely to affect health or safety environment; or
 - f. Humiliating treatment likely to affect health or safety.

- 3) An alleged act of Sexual Harassment committed during or outside of office hours falls under the purview of this policy. Further, it is important to note that whether harassment has occurred or not does not depend on the intention of the people but on the experience of the Aggrieved Woman.
2. Aggrieved Woman: "Aggrieved Woman" means, a woman, of any age, whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subjected to any act of Sexual Harassment by the Respondent in the Workplace and includes contractual staffs, temporary staffs, or visitors.
3. Complainant: "Complainant" means an Aggrieved Woman or any person as mentioned in clause H.
4. Employee: "Employee" means a person employed at a Workplace for any work on regular, temporary, adhoc or daily wage basis, either directly or by or through an agent, including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal Employer, whether for remuneration or not, or working on a voluntary basis or otherwise, whether the terms of employment are express or implied and includes a domestic worker, a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice or by any other name called;
5. Employer: "Employer" means a person who is responsible for management, supervision and control of the Workplace, for the purpose of this Policy.
6. Workplace: "Workplace" means:
 - i. Company office premises, Company's activities performed at any other site away from the Company's premises, Branch offices, Company business party or get-to-gather or celebration, Company transit house or guest house or official hotel stay or any other such place, Company vehicle including official tour by air, land, rail or sea, visited by the Employee arising out of, or during and in the course of employment.
 - ii. Any social, business or other functions where the conduct or comments may have an adverse impact on the Workplace relations.
 - iii. Any place visited by the Employee arising out of or during the course of employment including transportation provided by the Company for undertaking such journey.
7. Respondent: "Respondent" means a person against whom a complaint of Sexual Harassment has been made by the Complainant.

D. INTERNAL COMMITTEE:

The Internal Committee shall comprise the Lady Presiding Officer, two internal members (at least one female and one male officer) and one external member (Member from NGO or Legal Expert). An Internal Committee ("Committee") has been constituted by the Company under the POSH Act to conduct an inquiry and for redressal of a complaints of Sexual Harassment. Contact details of the Committee are provided into the schedule of this Policy.

E. COMPLAINTS MECHANISM:

1. Who can make a complaint?

A complaint for Sexual Harassment may be made by any Aggrieved Woman who believes she is being sexually harassed or by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with her written consent or such other persons as mentioned below:

- i. If the Aggrieved Woman is unable to make the complaint on account of her physical incapacity, her legal heir, relative or friend, co-worker, an officer of the National Commission for Women or State Women's Commission, by any person who has knowledge of the incident, may do so on her behalf with her written consent.

- ii. If the Aggrieved Woman is unable to make the complaint on account of her mental incapacity, her relative or friend, a special educator; or a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist, guardian or authority under whose care she is receiving treatment; or any person who has knowledge of the incident, jointly with her relative or friend or a special educator or qualified psychiatrist or psychologist, or guardian or authority under whose care she is receiving treatment or care.
- iii. If the Aggrieved Woman is dead, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with the written consent of her legal heir.

2. Registering a complaint:

- i. Any of the above, may submit a detailed complaint of the alleged incident of Sexual Harassment in writing, along with supporting documents, and the names and addresses of the witnesses, to any member of the Committee in writing with the Aggrieved Woman's signature, in six (6) copies within 3 months of occurrence of the incident of Sexual Harassment and in case of series of incidents of Sexual Harassment, within a period of three months from the date of the last such incident.
- ii. Any committee member may be informed or contacted on their email ids mentioned in Schedule A.
- iii. The committee may, for the reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the time limit not exceeding three months, if it is satisfied that the circumstances were such which prevented the woman from filing a complaint in 3 months.

F. RESOLUTION:

1. Through Conciliation:

At the request of the Aggrieved Woman, the committee may allow conciliation of the complaint between the Aggrieved Woman and Respondent. It may be noted here that monetary settlement shall not be the basis of such conciliation. Upon such settlement being arrived at by committee, it shall record such settlement and forward the same to the Company.

2. Through Formal Inquiry:

- i. In case where a settlement is not feasible or could not be arrived at through conciliation, the committee will conduct an inquiry into the complaint. Additionally, an inquiry may also be initiated if the Aggrieved Woman informs the committee that any terms of settlement has not been complied with by the Respondent.
- ii. The committee within 7 (seven) working days of receiving the complaint, shall forward one copy thereof to the Respondent for obtaining a response.
- iii. The Respondent within 10 (ten) working days of receiving the complaint, shall file his reply to the complaint along with list of supporting documents, names and addresses of witnesses.
- iv. The committee shall consider the reply from the Respondent and initiate an inquiry. The Complainant or the Respondent to the complaint shall not be allowed to bring any legal practitioner to represent them at any stage of the proceedings before the committee. The committee shall hear both the Complainant and the Respondent on date(s) intimated to them in advance and the principles of natural justice will be followed by the committee.
- v. In the event of failure to attend personal hearing before committee, either by the Complainant or the Respondent, on three consecutive dates (intimated in advance), the committee shall terminate the inquiry proceedings or give an ex-parte decision, as applicable. However, the committee shall serve a notice in writing to the party (ies), 15 (fifteen) days in advance, before such termination or the ex-parte order.
- vi. The inquiry process shall be completed within a maximum period of 90 (ninety) days from the date of receipt of the complaint.

- vii. The committee shall within 10 (ten) days from the date of completion of inquiry, provide a report of its findings to the Employer and such report shall also be forthwith made available to the Complainant and Respondent.
- viii. Where the conduct of Sexual Harassment amounts to a specific offence under the Indian Penal Code, (45 of 1860) or under any other law; it shall be the duty of committee to immediately inform the Complainant of her right to initiate action in accordance with the law with the appropriate authority, and to give advice and guidance regarding the same. Any such action or proceedings initiated shall be in addition to proceedings initiated and /or any action taken under this Policy.

G. PUNISHMENT FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

- 1) Penalties: If an employee is found to have violated this policy, the Management shall take such action as may be appropriate action for misconduct by the employee under the Company policy. Such actions may include any of the following, or a combination of the below mentioned statutory actions.
 - a. Written apology;
 - b. Warning;
 - c. Reprimand or censure;
 - d. Withholding of promotion;
 - e. Withholding of pay rise or increments;
 - f. Termination of employment;
 - g. Counselling session; or
 - h. Carrying out community service.
- 2) Compensation: The Committee can also recommend monetary compensation in favor of the Complainant by way of deduction from the salary or wages of the Respondent, in an amount that it may consider appropriate to be paid to the Complainant and in accordance with applicable law.

H. INTERIM RELIEF:

- 1. During pendency of the inquiry, on a written request made by the Complainant, the committee may recommend to the Employer to:
 - i. Transfer the Aggrieved Woman or the Respondent to any other Workplace; or
 - ii. Grant leave to the Aggrieved Woman of maximum 3 months, in addition to the leave she would be otherwise entitled; or
 - iii. Grant such other relief to the Aggrieved Woman as may found to be appropriate; or
 - iv. Restraint the Respondent from reporting on the work performance of the Complainant.
- 2. Once the recommendation(s) of interim relief are implemented, the Employer shall inform the committee regarding the same.

I. PROHIBITION ON DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION:

This Policy and the POSH Act prohibits any person including committee members from publishing, communicating or making known to the public, press and media in any manner, contents of the complaint, the identity and addresses of the Aggrieved Woman, Respondent and witnesses, any information relating to conciliation and inquiry proceedings, or recommendations of the committee during the proceedings. Any violation thereto shall also be subject to applicable disciplinary action of the Company. Further, the Employer shall impose monetary sanctions as per provisions of the POSH Act.

J. PROTECTION TO COMPLAINANT:

The Company is committed to ensuring that no Employee who brings forward a Sexual Harassment concern is subject to any form of reprisal. Any reprisal will be subject to disciplinary action. The Company will ensure that the victim or witnesses are not victimised or discriminated against while dealing with complaints of Sexual Harassment. However, anyone who abuses the procedure (for example, by maliciously putting an allegation knowing it to be untrue and/or produces any forged or misleading document) will be subject to applicable disciplinary action of the Company.

K. APPEAL:

Any person aggrieved by the recommendation of committee may prefer an appeal under the relevant provisions of the POSH Act.

L. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS:

Pursuant to written recommendation of the Employer based on the report and findings of committee and subject to the final outcome of the appeal proceedings, if any, necessary disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against the Respondent in terms of the applicable disciplinary action of the Company.

M. AMENDMENT TO THE POLICY:

The Company may revise the Policy as may be advised from time to time. Any change in the Policy shall be notified to all concerned.

Followings are the amendments to the Policy:

Sr.	Amendment Version	Details
1	POSH Policy Version 2.0	Reconstitution of Internal Complaints Committee
2	POSH Policy Version 2.1	Reconstitution of Internal Complaints Committee

SCHEDULE**INTERNAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Sr.	Name	Position	Email Address
1	Ms. Kajal Patel	Presiding Officer	kajal.patel@hester.in
2	Ms. Palak Shah	Member 1	palak.shah@hester.in
3	Mr. Sagar Desai	Member 2	sagar.desai@hester.in
4	Dr. Miti Randeri	External Member	miti@e4associates.com