

Sexual Harassment Policy

Policy Statement

The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI) is committed to providing a collegial working environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere which prohibits discriminatory practices. Sexual harassment is offensive, degrading and threatening. SICI considers sexual harassment unacceptable and will not tolerate it either on SICI premises or in the pursuance of any SICI activities.

This policy applies to all persons employed by SICI in both Canada and India, whether on a permanent, contract or part-time basis, while they are on SICI premises or engaged in SICI activities. Within the limitations of SICI's ability to impose disciplinary measures on persons not employed by it, the policy applies as well to persons such as Council Members, Committee Members, Advisory Council Members, fellowship and bursary recipients, and Summer Programme students, while these persons are on SICI premises or engaged in SICI activities.

SICI also recognizes that its employees and other persons engaged in SICI activities may be subject to sexual harassment in the course of such activities from persons with no SICI affiliation. Accordingly SICI acknowledges its responsibility to investigate all allegations of sexual harassment lodged with it and to support and assist those subjected to such harassment.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature.

Types of behaviour which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to

- ◆ unwanted physical contact
- ◆ unwelcome suggestive remarks, inquiries and gestures
- ◆ verbal abuse or threats
- ◆ demands for sexual favours
- ◆ physical assault
- ◆ inappropriate jokes, taunting and teasing
- ◆ display of pornographic or other derogatory material on SICI premises.

Sexual harassment can be exacerbated

- ◆ when submission to this behaviour is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individual's employment, status within the organization, or favourable assessments of that individual's performance or application;
- ◆ when a reprisal or threat of reprisal is made if the behaviour is not accepted or if the behaviour is reported;
- ◆ when such conduct interferes with the individual's work performance, professional progress or contribution to the organization; and/or
- ◆ when such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Procedures

SICI takes the position that the elimination of sexual harassment is a collective responsibility. The Institute has the duty, *inter alia*, to prevent sexual harassment by distributing its policy to all employees and other persons affiliated with it. Persons in a position of authority in SICI have the

duty to take immediate appropriate action after becoming aware of a complaint or an occurrence of sexual harassment. Victims of harassment have a role to play in stopping such behaviour, although making attempts to resolve the situation themselves is not a necessary condition of lodging a complaint.

Any SICI employee or person participating in SICI activities who feels that he/she is being subjected to harassment in the course of SICI activities may take any or all of the following actions:

- ◆ tell the harasser that his/her behaviour is unwelcome and constitutes sexual harassment;
- ◆ ask him/her to stop the behaviour;
- ◆ document the dates, times, locations, possible witnesses, the nature of the unwelcome behaviour and his/her response to that behaviour; and/or
- ◆ lodge a written complaint with the Director, India Office (in India) or the Executive Director (in Canada). If these officers are themselves implicated in the harassment, then the complaint should be lodged with the President.

SICI urges persons to file either an informal or formal complaint with SICI as soon as possible after the harassment. SICI will act on all complaints lodged within six months of the most recent alleged incident.

Confidentiality

SICI understands that it is difficult to come forward with a complaint of sexual harassment and recognizes a complainant's interest in keeping the matter confidential. To protect the interests of the complainant, the person complained against and any others who may report incidents of sexual harassment, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances. All records of complaints, including contents of meetings, interviews, results of investigations and other relevant material will be kept confidential by SICI, except where disclosure is required by a disciplinary or other remedial process.

Disciplinary Action

Appropriate disciplinary measures may range from letters of reprimand to dismissal (in the case of employees) and exclusion from future SICI activities and awards (in the case of those who are not employees). Regardless of the outcome of a sexual harassment complaint made in good faith, SICI will protect the person lodging the complaint, as well as anyone providing information, from any form of retaliation by SICI personnel.

Since SICI will treat any complaints of sexual harassment very seriously, any attempt to misuse its policies and procedures on this matter through the filing of frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints will result in disciplinary action.

Originally approved by the Board of Directors in June 1994.

Reissued to conform to new structure June 2005.