



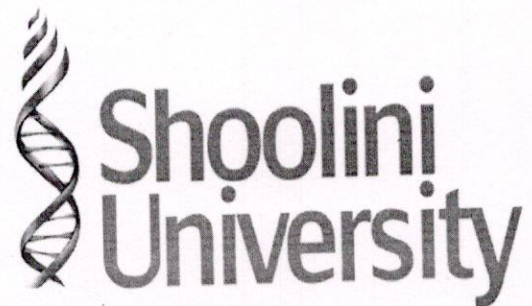
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## Whistleblower Protection Policy

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## **Whistleblower Protection Policy**

### **Purpose**

Shoolini University is committed to uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. The purpose of this policy is to create a safe and supportive environment for employees to report alleged wrongdoing in good faith without fear of retaliation. Additionally, this policy defines the responsibilities of both employees and management in promptly reporting fraud or misconduct and outlines the procedures for handling such reports.

### **Reporting Wrongdoing**

We encourage all employees to promptly report any significant violations of university regulations or local, state, or national laws. Employees are urged to bring forward suspicions of wrongdoing in good faith to a designated Shoolini University official or public body.

### **Protection from Retaliation**

The University is committed to safeguarding the rights of whistleblowers. Any employee who reports alleged wrongdoing in good faith will be protected from adverse employment actions in retaliation for making such reports. It is our firm belief that no employee should face negative consequences for acting in the best interests of the University and the community.

This policy does not extend protection to employees who self-report their own misconduct or misbehaviour. However, we still strongly encourage self-reporting of any wrongdoing as part of our commitment to maintaining a transparent and accountable community. By fostering a culture of openness and accountability, we can collectively work towards maintaining the highest standards of ethics and conduct within the Shoolini University.

### **Policies on Conduct, Behaviour, and Reporting at the University**

At the University, we have put in place a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to uphold the highest standards of conduct and behaviour among our employees. These guidelines are not only based on the principles of the University but also in compliance with relevant state and federal laws. We firmly uphold that no supervisor or University official can force any employee to violate a university policy, applicable laws, or public policies.

In line with our commitment to the University's best interests, we encourage employees who possess knowledge of potential wrongful conduct to promptly report it to the University Ethics and Compliance Office. We believe that transparency and accountability are vital in maintaining a positive working environment and protecting the integrity of our institution.



## **Responsibility of Employees and Management**

The University's Code of Conduct serves as a fundamental reference for professional behaviour and emphasizes the obligation of all individuals representing the University to act in ways that instil trust and confidence in the system's integrity. It is essential that no action taken by university personnel should compromise their commitment to the University.

All employees share the responsibility of safeguarding the University's resources and ensuring they are utilized solely for authorized purposes, adhering to established rules, policies, and applicable laws. Any use of university resources for personal gain or non-university purposes is strictly prohibited and constitutes a violation of our policies.

Furthermore, management employees hold a particular responsibility in detecting fraudulent activities or misconduct within their respective areas of responsibility. To fulfil this duty, managers must be well-informed about potential improprieties that may occur in their areas and stay vigilant for any signs of dishonest or improper behaviour. In cases where misconduct is identified or suspected, it is the responsibility of management to investigate thoroughly, differentiating between errors or misunderstandings and potential fraud. Appropriate corrective actions should be taken to ensure that adequate controls are in place to prevent any recurrence of fraudulent activities.

## **Compliance with Laws and Reporting Obligations**

In addition to adhering to university policies, all employees are required to comply with national and state laws. This includes mandatory reporting of any instances of abuse or neglect of minors visiting our university or participating in university-sponsored activities. We take these reporting obligations seriously as part of our commitment to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all individuals associated with the University.

By upholding these policies and working collectively to ensure a culture of ethical behaviour, we can strengthen the reputation of our university and create a positive impact on the academic community we serve.

## **Protection for Whistleblowers Reporting Fraud or Misconduct**

At our institution, we strictly adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Government of India, which grants comprehensive protection to our valued system employees who courageously come forward to report fraud or misconduct. This protection extends to employees who engage in the following activities:

- 1. Disclosure:** Employees who disclose or express their intention to disclose to their supervisor or any Office of the University an act or omission that they reasonably believe to be a violation of law, rule, or regulation by another University employee.
- 2. Cooperation:** Employees who provide information or testify before any investigating, hearing, or inquiry into a violation of law, rule, or regulation.
- 3. Participation:** Employees who assist or participate in a proceeding to enforce the Ethics Act.



## **Retaliatory Measures Prohibited**

The University is resolute in its commitment to maintaining a fair and supportive environment for all employees. As such, we strictly prohibit any retaliatory action against whistleblowers who engage in any of the protected activities mentioned above. Retaliatory measures, such as reprimands, discharge, suspension, demotion, denial of promotion, or transfer, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

## **Remedies for Whistleblowers**

In the unfortunate event that retaliation does occur, the Ethics Act ensures that appropriate remedies are available for affected employees. These remedies may include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Making the Employee Whole:** Taking necessary steps to restore the affected employee to the position they would have been in had the retaliation not occurred.
- 2. Reinstatement:** Reinstating the employee to their previous position with all associated rights and privileges.
- 3. Two Times Back Pay:** Providing the employee with compensation equivalent to double the number of lost wages due to retaliation.
- 4. Interest on Back Pay:** Offering interest on any back pay owed to the employee.
- 5. Payment of Reasonable Costs and Attorneys' Fees:** Covering reasonable expenses incurred by the employee, including legal fees, related to seeking remedial relief.

## **Cooperation and Confidentiality in Reporting and Investigations**

Upon making a report, the employee involved should refrain from further engagement in the matter unless specifically instructed otherwise by the University authorities or committee constituted for such purpose.

As responsible members of the University community, all employees are obligated to cooperate fully with the University, and any other relevant law enforcement agencies during the detection, reporting, and investigation of fraud and/or misconduct, including the pursuit of legal actions against offenders. In such cases, management's involvement will be directed by the administration overseeing the University investigation.

The University is responsible for maintaining comprehensive records of all reported allegations. Subsequently, either the University HR Office or an appropriate referring unit (e.g., internal audit, university security, public safety, human resources) will conduct a follow-up, which may entail a thorough investigation of the disclosed matter. It is important to recognize that laws and University policies impose privacy and confidentiality restrictions on reporting the outcomes of such reviews or investigations. Nonetheless, within the boundaries of these laws and policies, the University HR Office will acknowledge the receipt of the disclosure and, where permissible by law and policy, provide confirmation of the status and conclusion of the review.

It is essential to differentiate between a disclosure warranting an investigation and a complaint of reprisal, which involves adverse employment actions or situations. In instances of disclosure, the University will make every reasonable effort to maintain the confidentiality of the employee



making the disclosure, if doing so does not hinder the investigation of the specific allegations or impede the implementation of corrective measures.

The University remains steadfast in its commitment to take appropriate disciplinary and legal action against employees involved in fraudulent activities. Such actions may include termination of employment, the requirement for restitution, and the appropriate reporting to the relevant authorities in accordance with established University policies, procedures, as well as state and federal law.

By fostering a culture of cooperation and upholding confidentiality where necessary, we strive to ensure that our university maintains its integrity and accountability, fostering an environment of trust and respect for all members of our community.

### **Handling Complaints of Reprisal**

In the event of complaints of reprisal, the University Ethics and Compliance Office will take immediate action to address the situation fairly and impartially. The process will involve the following steps:

- 1. Appointment of an Investigator:** The University HR Office will collaborate with the Vice Chancellor to designate an experienced investigator. This investigator will be tasked with conducting a thorough and unbiased examination or committee to be constituted.
- 2. Investigation and Reporting:** The appointed investigator will diligently gather all relevant information and evidence related to the complaint or Committee. Once the is complete, the same will submit a comprehensive report to the Registrar through Director HR. This report will outline the findings and provide recommendations regarding whether retaliation has occurred and, if so, what appropriate remedies should be implemented.
- 3. Final Decision:** The Vice Chancellor after carefully reviewing the investigator's report, will make a final decision based on the findings and recommendations presented. The decision of the Vice Chancellor will be conclusive and binding.

At every stage of this process, confidentiality and sensitivity will be maintained to protect the rights and privacy of all parties involved. The University is committed to ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all its employees, where complaints are taken seriously and addressed promptly and fairly.

By following this procedure, we strive to maintain a workplace free from reprisals and foster a culture of trust, openness, and accountability within the University community.

  
Registrar