

The Assam Kaziranga University

CHAPTER 4: POLICY STATEMENT AND CODE OF CONDUCT

4.1. GENERAL POLICY

4.1.1 Policy for Persons with Disabilities:

The University shall not discriminate against any applicant or employee in hiring, review, promotion, demotion, discharge or other aspects of employment on the basis of that person's disability if the person is qualified and able to perform the essential functions of the respective job with reasonable accommodation.

4.1.2 Policy for Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace:

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol by employees of the University is strictly prohibited. All employees as a condition of employment shall inform the University if he/she is convicted for possessing / using drugs within twenty four (24) hours of conviction.

An employee convicted for drug and/or alcohol violation shall face strong disciplinary action as may be determined by the University, and may include without limitation termination of employment. If reasonable cause exists to believe that an employee is under the influence and is impaired by drugs and/or alcohol while on duty, the employee shall be required to undergo a breath analyser test and/or such other suitable screening test, and suitable disciplinary action shall be taken thereafter. Smoking on campus is strictly prohibited.

4.1.3 Policy against Sexual Harassment and Gender Bias:

In line with the Constitution of India that guarantees equality, dignity and non-discrimination, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the University reaffirms its policy of **zero-tolerance** against sexual harassment and is committed to creating an environment that respects and protects the rights of all its members, irrespective of their gender.

This policy shall apply to all students and employees of the University as well as to others who participate in the University's programmes, activities and employment in both on and off campus settings. An aggrieved person may approach the KU-Internal Complaints Committee (KU-ICC) that has been established under the appropriate laws of the Republic of India. All matters handled by the KU-ICC will be kept highly confidential and the personal details of the victim and complainant shall be kept out of the public space for as long as necessary to ensure a healthy rehabilitative

environment. Unwelcome sexual advancements, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature constitute sexual harassment including:

1. Physical contact and advances; or
2. Demand or request for sexual favours; or
3. Sexually coloured remarks; or
4. Showing Pornography; or
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct of sexual nature.

4.1.4 Policy for Soliciting/ Canvassing:

Canvassing, placing signs and posters for solicitation purposes, chain letters and collections of any kind and sales of tickets or merchandise are prohibited on the University premises, except as permitted by the management of the University. All employees are prohibited from indulging in any personal activity utilizing the University's resources and facilities. Any staff member found indulging in conducting tuition classes or coaching classes whether for remuneration or otherwise shall be suspended with immediate effect.

4.1.5 Policy for Attendance:

Employees are required to be prompt in reporting to work on time. It is expected that employees shall remain on the job until the end of the workday unless excused by the Dean and or reporting supervisor as the case may be. An employee, who knows he / she will be absent from work on a particular day shall report such anticipated absence to the Dean and Head of the Department. A record of tardiness and unexcused absences will result in loss of pay or other disciplinary action(s) which may even lead to termination of employment. Leaves may availed in accordance with established procedures as provided in Chapter below.

The biometric time recording tool shall be used by all staff members to record time of entry & exit. Accurately recording time worked shall be the responsibility of every employee. Failing to punch in the biometric on time either at entry or exit will attract a warning. On having received two prior warnings and failing to punch in the biometric on time either at entry or exit will result in the employee being marked as absent for the day on Leave without Pay. Failing to punch in the biometric at all on any workday will result in the employee being marked as absent for the day on Leave without Pay.

Time keeping shall also be maintained by an Attendance Register which the employees have to sign daily as their attendance. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records shall result in strict disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

A. Absence from Work

Unauthorised absence from work shall be considered as misconduct and strict official action shall be initiated. **For an unscheduled absence only in the instance of a medical or personal emergency, employees shall personally notify their School Dean and/or Head of Department and the HR Department as soon as possible of the absence but not less than one (1) hour after the start of the workday.** Failure to do so will result in the absence being considered Leave without Pay. If an employee is absent from work for six (6) consecutive scheduled workdays and has not notified his or her supervisor of the unscheduled absence, the employee shall be considered to have resigned voluntarily from the University. The respective Dean and/or Head of the Department must inform the HR Department of such absence as soon as possible. Employees failing to return to work by the expected return date after an approved absence shall be considered to be on Leave without Pay.

4.1.6 Policy for Conflict of Interest:

An employee of the University shall avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest between his/ her University's obligations/ responsibilities and outside activities.

Transaction with outside organizations shall be conducted within the framework established and controlled by the University. Any dealings with outside organizations should not result in unusual gains for those organizations. Unusual gain refers to bribes, product bonuses, special fringe benefits, unusual price breaks and other windfalls designed to ultimately benefit the employer, the employee, or both. Promotional plans that could be interpreted to involve unusual gain shall require the University's prior written approval.

4.1.7 Outside Employment:

Employees shall not hold any type of outside employment/assignment/responsibility either for personal interest or for public interest as long as they are an employee of University.

In case of any request for special type of service from any other organization, the employee shall be liable to take a formal written permission from the Registrar stating clearly the type of activity and the outcome of such special activity. Special requests shall include Guest Lectures, Chairmanship of committees or working in any other capacity outside the University.

4.1.8 Work Ethics:

The successful operation and reputation of the University shall be built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of its employees. Employees owe a duty, to the University, to act in a manner that will merit the continued trust and confidence

of the students, parents of the students and the general public at large. The University shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its employees (both teaching and non – teaching) at all levels to conduct work in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct. In situations where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed with higher authorities for advice and consultation. No employee shall indulge in or encourage any form of malpractice connected with any activity (teaching or administrative) of the University. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of work ethics and conduct shall lead to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

4.1.9 Non – disclosure Agreement:

The position held by employees is of a strictly confidential nature. Employees shall not, (other than in the proper course of fulfilling their duties), either during the Term or at any time thereafter: (i) use, disclose or communicate to any person, firm, company or third party, any confidential information relating to the University or the University’s affiliates, which they have come to know or have received or obtained at any time by reason of or in connection with their employment; (ii) or copy or reproduce any confidential information relating to the University or the University’s affiliates, without obtaining the prior written permission of the University’s management.

The obligations of confidentiality shall not apply to any information that:

- i. was known to the employee prior to its disclosure by the University without any obligation of confidentiality; or
- ii. has become generally available to the public (other than due to disclosure by the employee).

In the event any employee is required to disclose confidential information pursuant to any requirement of law, order, regulation, ruling or order of a competent court or executive authority applicable to the employee, he/she shall provide the University with prompt notice of such requirement to disclose, to enable the University to seek a protective order or other appropriate remedy. In the event that such a protective order or other protective remedy is not obtained, the employee will furnish only that portion of the confidential information which is legally required to be disclosed, and will make best efforts to obtain confidential treatment of any disclosed confidential information. The employee will give the University written notice of the information to be disclosed in advance of its disclosure.

This Clause 4.1.9 shall survive the termination of the Letter of Employment and/or the

Employment of the employee with the University in any manner and shall remain in force for a period of five (5) years from the date of such termination. Any breach under this Clause shall be construed to be a material breach of the terms of the Letter of Employment. The Employees acknowledge that the disclosure or use of Confidential Information in violation of this Clause 4.1.9 could cause irreparable harm to the University for which monetary damages may be difficult to ascertain or an inadequate remedy. The Employee therefore agrees that the University will have the right, in addition to its other rights and remedies, to seek injunctive relief for any violation of these terms and conditions without posting bond, or by posting bond at the lowest amount required by law.

Confidential information shall include but is not limited to, the following examples:

1. Compensation data
2. Pending projects and proposal
3. Computer processes
4. Research and development strategies
5. Computer program & codes
6. Scientific data
7. Any published/ unpublished research data
8. Marketing strategies
9. Computer lists
10. Scientific formulae
11. Technological data
12. Scientific prototypes
13. Customer/ clients lists
14. Financial information
15. Human Resource Strategies
16. New market research
17. Student Data

Accepting the terms and conditions laid out in the Letter of Employment shall be treated as the employee's agreement to the terms and conditions contained in this Clause 4.1.9 and this shall be treated as a precondition of employment. Employees or associated members who improperly use or disclose trade secrets or confidential business information shall be subjected to legal action/ disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

4.2. EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT:

4.2.1 Misconduct

All employees shall follow the Rules and Regulations and standards of courtesy,

conduct, cooperation, ethics and etiquettes as expected by the University. Offences such as the following (but not limited to) when committed shall constitute misconduct and will attract disciplinary action:

1. Consumption of alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol while on duty;
2. Sleeping/dozing while on duty
3. Consumption of drugs or being under the influence of drugs while on duty;
4. Wilful insubordination or disobedience and refusal to take lawful orders;
5. Refusal, negligence or omitting to perform one's official duties and/or discharge official responsibilities duly assigned;
6. Incompetence or inefficiency in the performance of prescribed duties;
7. Persistent late coming and/ or absence from duty without permission;
8. Use of abusive or insulting language or behaviour or assault;
9. Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace;
10. Acts or omissions that are prejudicial to the proper performance of duties or the University's image or status, whether within or outside the University;
11. Misuse of or damage to University property;
12. Slander;
13. Discrimination;
14. Forgery, falsifying or presenting false documents and/or records for the purposes of disseminating wrong information, obtaining money or reward or favour;
15. Absconding from duty;
16. Breaching or contravening the University's prescribed operating rules, regulations and procedures likely to cause financial loss or damage of University property;
17. Persistent failure or negligence of a supervisor to enforce discipline or follow prescribed University rules, procedures and standing instruction;
18. Theft, fraud, or embezzlement of University's funds and property;
19. Unauthorized access or removal, alteration, mutilation or destruction of University documents, records, or information;
20. Taking part in strike/ hartals/gherao/picketing within the premises of the University;
21. Acts likely to endanger the safety or life of or which may result in injury to another person, including gross negligence or misconduct, violence or fighting;
22. Soliciting or accepting bribes;
23. Plagiarism; and
24. Non adherence to any other policies of the University.

4.2.2 Gross Misconduct

Any of the above offences may be construed as gross misconduct by the University depending upon the circumstances and gravity of the offence.

4.2.3 Disciplinary Measures

There shall be four principal forms of disciplinary measures namely: warning, suspension, termination and dismissal depending on the gravity of the offence. The University shall exercise its discretion to impose disciplinary measures upon an employee for misconduct as it may consider appropriate. Any person may bring any act of misconduct and violation of these rules by a member of faculty or staff to the notice of the Dean of the School or Department Head. The Dean of the School or Department Head shall immediately bring to the notice of the HR Department and the Registrar regarding such misconduct from his/ her faculty or staff. The “**Staff Disciplinary Committee**” constituted by the Vice Chancellor and/or Director shall decide upon all cases of such misconduct.

a. Warning

The Staff Disciplinary Committee will send warnings to the staff member of the University accused of misconduct. There shall be two types of warning:

1. **Verbal warning:** shall be issued once to a first time offender deemed to have committed a light offence;
2. **Written warning:** shall be issued to an employee who fails to correct his/her behaviour or commits another offence after being given a verbal warning. A written warning shall specify:
 - i. The identified deficiencies or inadequacies and improvements required;
 - ii. Any recommendations to assist the employee reform;
 - iii. The period within which an employee must show improvement beyond which subsequent disciplinary action shall be taken.

The University reserves the right to forgo any warning in case of misconduct at its sole and absolute discretion.

b. Termination:

The power to terminate the services of an employee shall be vested in the Vice – Chancellor and/or the Director, and/or such other person as may be designated by them:

1. The employee’s contract may be terminated with or without notice if the University believes that the continued employment of such a person would prejudice or affect other employees’ performance or compromise the University’s interest.
2. Termination shall be with such benefits as the University shall decide on a case to case basis.

c. Dismissal

The power to summarily dismiss the services of an employee shall be vested in the Vice – Chancellor and/or the Director, and/or such other person as may be designated by them:

1. Both gross misconduct and gross neglect of duty are punishable by dismissal from employment.
2. An employee who is dismissed from service as a result of criminal conviction shall neither be given notice nor paid salary in lieu of notice.

4.2.4 Grievance Redressal:

1. An employee with a grievance shall present it to their respective Dean or Head of the Department in writing for resolution, with a copy marked to the HR Department of the University;
2. Where the Dean or Head of Department fails to resolve the grievance within seven (7) of working days, such grievance shall be referred to the Registrar who shall handle the grievance and shall conclude it within seven (7) working days from the receipt of the complaint.
3. Where the Dean or Head of the Department fails to resolve the grievance, such grievance shall be forward to the “**Staff Grievances and Redressal Committee**” constituted and chaired by the Registrar. The Committee shall resolve the grievance of the employee within the fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the grievance from the respective Dean and/or Head of the Department. The decision of the Committee shall be deemed final.
4. In each of the cases the employee shall be notified/ intimated by a written communication from the Dean and/or Head of the Department as the case maybe.

4.2.5 Employees Facing Criminal Charges:

1. Where criminal proceedings are instituted against an employee in any court of law, no proceedings for his or her dismissal upon any grounds involved in the criminal charge shall be taken or proceeded with until the conclusion of the criminal proceedings and the determination of any appeal therefrom.
2. Nothing in this Handbook shall be construed as prohibiting or restricting the authorised officer of the University, the power to suspend such an employee.
3. Any employee convicted and proved guilty of a criminal offence shall be immediately dismissed without any benefits.

4.2.6 Personal Appearance:

During office hours or when representing the University, the employees are expected to present a clean, neat and professional appearance. Employees shall dress and groom according to the requirements of their position and accepted social standards. This shall be particularly true if the job involves dealing with visitors in person. All members are expected to dress formally including formal shoes during all Office Hours. On Saturdays, the dress code may be relaxed to smart business casuals.

The following personal appearance guidelines should be followed:

1. Bermudas, Spaghetti-strapped shirts, Tank tops or revealing shirts, Short mini-skirts or dresses, Sheer clothing and shorts do not represent appropriate professional attire;
2. Unnaturally coloured hair and extreme hairstyles, such as spiked hair, do not present an appropriate professional appearance;
3. Poor personal hygiene is not professionally acceptable;
4. Facial jewellery, such as eyebrow rings, nose piercings for men, lip rings, and tongue studs, is not professionally appropriate and shall not be permitted during office hours;
5. Sportswear is not permitted attire;
6. Clothing with commentary or taglines that do not meet the norms of an ethical organisation, including those with political commentary, or depicting alcohol, drugs, tobacco consumption etc. and/or with inappropriate or offensive gestures or advertising;
7. Formal wear includes:
 - a. For Men:
 - Formal Collared Shirt, neatly pressed;
 - Formal Trousers
 - Closed Toed Formal Shoes
 - b. For Women:
 - Indian Formals, including sarees, salwar suits, kurtis with appropriate bottomwear;
 - Western Formals.

4.2.7 Gratuities

Employees of the University shall not accept gratuities, courtesies or gifts in any form from any person or persons, corporations or associations that directly or indirectly, seek to use the connection so as to secure favourable comment or consideration on any commercial commodity, process or undertaking.

4.2.8 General Rules:

The University's best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action shall be to correct the problem, prevent recurrences and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Although employment with the University shall be based on mutual consent, the University shall have the right to terminate employment at its sole discretion, with or without cause or advance notice under the policy of progressive discipline. The code of conduct is as follows:

1. In order to foster an environment which encourages high standards of learning, teaching and research, we believe that both personal and academic integrity are critical. The University expects all individuals to conduct themselves with uncompromising integrity in both, personal and academic life;
2. Further, members should lead by example and not indulge in practices such as biased evaluations, partiality during coursework, plagiarism, and unfair research practices. You will not indulge in any violent, riotous behaviour. Disciplinary action may be taken against any individual violating of this Code;
3. The University encourages students, faculty and staff members to uphold values such as integrity and honesty. The University strongly disapproves of corruption in all its forms. The University believes that giving and receiving bribes constitute corrupt practices that are strictly prohibited;
4. The University at the same time acknowledges that giving gifts is also a culture of expressing appreciation; illustratively a gift given as a memento after a seminar or guest lecture;
5. Intimidating/blackmailing/harassing/threatening any person to do any act in favour of the person threatening is also deemed to be corrupt practice;
6. **Free Speech** – The University is committed to providing an environment that fosters academic enquiry and expression of ideas. Individuals are entitled to express their views provided such views are not contrary to this Handbook, provisions of the Constitution or any applicable law. This freedom comes with the basic expectation of responsible behaviour specifically in upholding the confidentiality of certain information that the person may be privy to;
7. **Retaliation** - The University prohibits retaliatory action or reprisal against an individual for reporting an incident of discrimination or harassment or being a witness in any inquiry on discrimination or harassment. Retaliatory action includes but is not limited to intimidation, unjustified grading and performance reviews, denial of promotion, threat of expulsion and termination, expulsion and termination;
8. During normal business hours, and at other times as may be necessary for the due performance of an employee's duties, he/she shall diligently and efficiently devote their entire time, skill and attention to the work of the University;
9. Each employee shall perform the duties appropriate to their employment which are expressly or impliedly allotted to them by the University or their superiors in the University on such terms and subject to such restrictions as the University may impose;
10. Each employee shall perform their duties with reasonable care and skill in accordance with the best of industry standards, including without limitation ensuring the highest ethical standards and moral restraint as is deemed fit for an employee of an university and/or educational institution;

11. Each employee shall be required to maintain records and documentation, either in writing or electronic format, of all technical data, processes, formulae, technology, designs, drawings, engineering, programming information, improvements, etc., made, conceived or developed by them, either alone or jointly with others, in the course of their Employment with the University, whether within the University's premises or elsewhere, and whether within business hours or otherwise, regardless of whether such information constitutes invention and submit such documentation/records to the designated authority of the University, on a weekly basis;
12. All employees shall act in the best interests of the University and will take care not to do anything that would be detrimental to the reputation and the functions of the University. All employees will exercise proper skill and care in carrying out their duties and will endeavour to perform their duties in a professional manner and, at all times, uphold the mission and goals of the University;
13. All employee must adhere to additional rules and regulations, rights, benefits and obligations as are set forth in any handbook/policy/manual adopted by the University. The rules, regulations, rights, benefits and obligations set forth in such handbook/policy/manuals and in future subsequent revisions of the handbook/policy/manual are deemed incorporated by reference into this Handbook and shall form an integral part of the Employment contract. The University reserves the right to alter or revise any handbook/policy/manual adopted by it or any other rules or regulations at its sole discretion and you agree to be bound by such revision;
14. All employees will observe and comply with all the rules, regulations and directives of the University as may be made or given to them from time to time. The University shall have the right to alter and amend the rules and regulations as well as any of the terms of employment, and such alteration or amendment shall become fully effective and a binding term of employment; and
15. All employees must comply with all applicable legislations, by-laws, rules, regulations and requirements of any governmental authority;
16. Violation of any of the provisions of this code of conduct by any of the employee shall result in taking stringent disciplinary action including, but not limited to termination of employment.

4.2.9 Work Place Etiquettes:

The University shall strive to maintain a positive work environment where employees treat each other with respect and courtesy. Sometimes issues arise when employees are unaware that their behaviour in the work place may be disruptive or annoying others. Many of these day- to-day issues may be addressed by politely talking with co-workers to bring the issue to his or her attention.

The University encourages all employees and associate members to keep an open mind and graciously accept constructive feedback or a request to change behaviour that may be affecting another employee's ability to concentrate in work.

4.2.10 Political Activity:

As an individual, each employee of the University shall retain all rights and obligations of citizenship enshrined in the Constitution of India. However, no employee of the University shall be allowed to be a candidate for a political party seeking votes while being employed with the University, or take part in a political campaign while on duty.

4.2.11 Media Interaction and Press Releases:

Without prior sanction from the University, no employee shall talk to the media or publish any statement either by name or anonymously about issues related to University matters.

4.2.12 Supplies, Expenditures, Obligating the University:

Only authorized persons may purchase supplies in the name of the University. No employee whose regular duties do not include purchasing shall incur any expense on behalf of the university or bind Kaziranga University by any promise or representation without written approval.

4.2.13 Expense Reimbursement:

Expenses incurred by an employee must have prior approval of the Vice Chancellor and/or Director. All completed reimbursement request forms should be submitted to the Accounts Department within two (2) days of completion of the approved tour.

4.2.14 Visitors in the Workplace:

To provide for the safety and security of employees, visitors, and the facilities at the University, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace to ensure security, decrease insurance liability, protect confidential information, uphold employee welfare, and avoid potential distractions and disorder. All visitors must undergo the necessary entry formalities and security checks at the entrance that are notified by the University from time to time.

4.2.15 Telephone Use:

All telephone and mobile connections provided by the University are intended for the use of serving staff and faculty for official use only.

Except for extreme emergencies, personal usage is discouraged. All personal telephone calls should be kept concise to avoid congestion on the telephone line. The University telephone numbers provided for official use should not be linked to any personal account, including bank accounts, Adhaar, PAN etc.

If an employee is found to be opposing this policy, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action.

4.2.16 Official WhatsApp:

Where official mobile numbers are provided by the University, the employee shall open a WhatsApp Business account, and shall follow the following rules in this regard:

- a. Display Picture must be a logo of the University;
- b. Business Name: Name of the Employee
- c. Business Description: Kaziranga University – The Career University of the Northeast
- d. Email address: Official Email ID of the employee
- e. Website: www.kazirangauniversity.in
- f. Category: Education

4.2.17 Identity Card and Access Card:

The Employee Identification Card (ID) is provided to all employees upon their joining and provides them access to the University premises. The Employee Access Card (EAC) is provided to all employees of the University and provides access to a variety of resources at the University. The ID and EAC are the property of the University and must be presented upon the request of an appropriate University official, and may be revoked at any time by the University. Upon completion of job assignment at KU the ID card and EAC should be returned to HR Department along with no dues/clearance certificate.

4.2.18 Internet Use:

The employees of Kaziranga University are allowed use of the University Internet to perform their job. Employees may use the Internet when appropriate, to access information needed to conduct business of the University. Use of the Internet must not disrupt operation of the University computer network or interfere with an employee's productivity. Employees are responsible for using the Internet in an ethical and lawful manner. Employees may not download torrents, movies, videos, songs, documents or software that are not in the course of conducting University work.

Internet messages are public and not private. The university reserves the right to access and monitor all files and messages on its systems.

4.2.19 Use of University Assets:

The University's assets (such as desktops, laptops, telephones, mobile phones, printers, and photocopying and fax machines) are acquired through the expenditure of University resources and are intended for use in the University's business. Each employee is responsible for the proper use of University assets. Employees must not use University assets solely for self-benefiting purposes. Such use is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the appropriate University officer or manager.

