Internal Complaint Committee- Complaint Redressal Mechanism

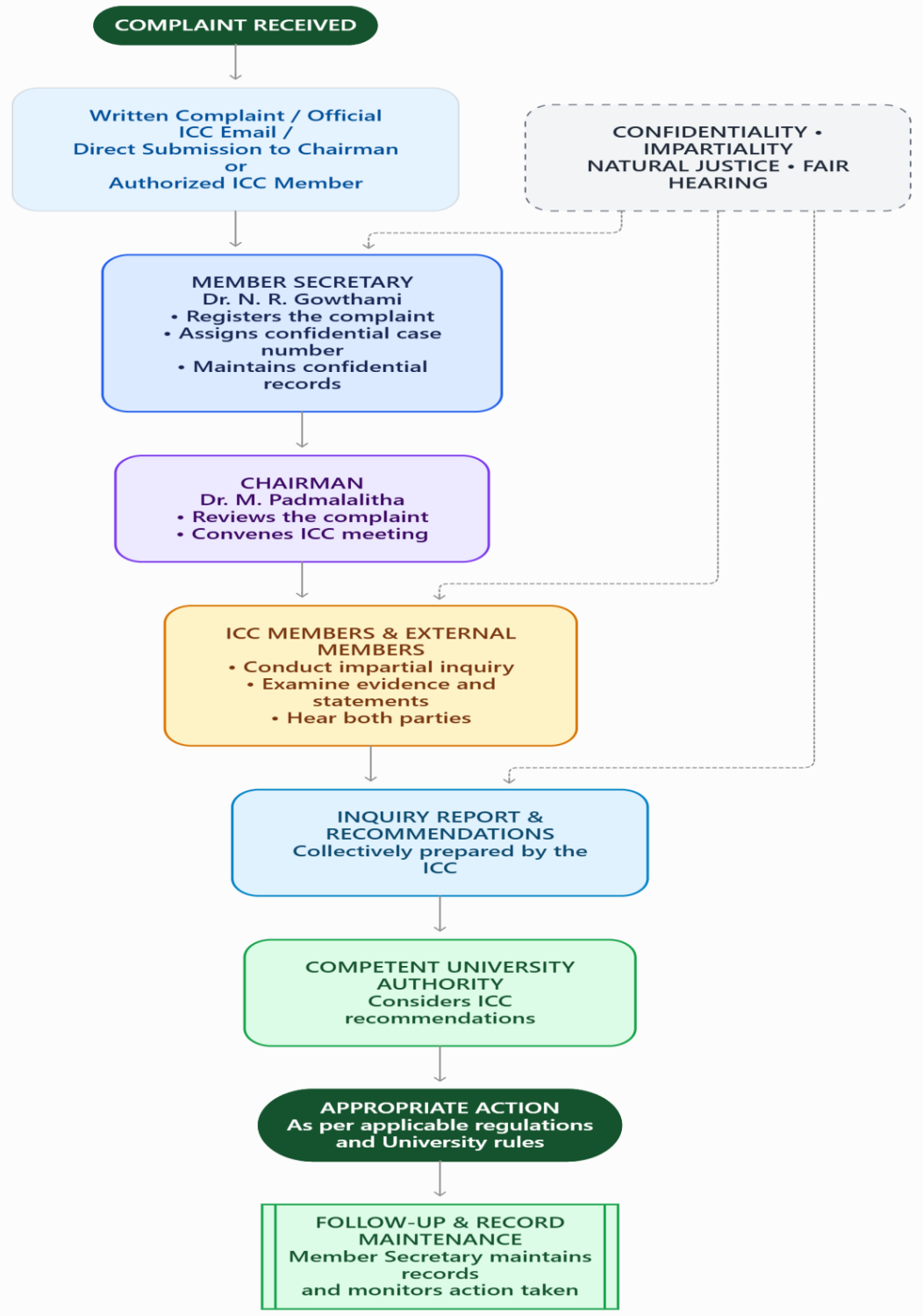


Fig-1. ICC Redressal Mechanism

The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is responsible for providing a safe, respectful and gender-sensitive environment for students and employees of the University. It serves as the institutional mechanism for receiving, examining and addressing complaints relating to sexual harassment in

accordance with applicable UGC regulations and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The complaint-handling mechanism consists of six major stages, beginning with the receipt of a complaint and ending with the implementation of appropriate action by the competent University authority.

1. Receipt of Complaint

The first stage is the formal receipt of a complaint from an aggrieved person who experiences or reports an incident of sexual harassment within the University.

Modes of receiving complaints

Complaints may be submitted through the following channels:

- Written complaint: The aggrieved person may submit a signed written complaint to the Chairman or Member Secretary of the ICC.
- Official ICC email: The complaint may be sent to the designated official ICC email address of the University.
- Direct submission: The complainant may approach the Chairman or any authorized ICC member and communicate the complaint.
- Assistance in submitting a complaint: Where required, the ICC should provide reasonable assistance to the aggrieved person in documenting and submitting the complaint.

Initial handling of the complaint

Upon receiving the complaint:

1. The receiving member shall ensure that the complaint is forwarded to the Member Secretary without unnecessary delay.
2. The identity and personal details of the complainant shall be kept confidential.
3. The complaint shall be handled sensitively, without discrimination or victimization.
4. The complainant shall be informed about the procedure for further action.

Objective: To ensure that every complaint is received through an accessible, safe and confidential mechanism.

2. Registration of Complaint by the Member Secretary

Responsible Officer: Dr. N. R. Gowthami – Member Secretary, ICC

The Member Secretary acts as the administrative and documentation coordinator of the ICC. This stage is important because all complaints and related proceedings must be systematically recorded and securely maintained.

Responsibilities of the Member Secretary

1. Receive the complaint submitted by the complainant or forwarded by another ICC member.
2. Enter the complaint details in the confidential complaint register.
3. Assign a unique confidential case number for identification and tracking.
4. Record the date of receipt and mode of submission.
5. Maintain a separate confidential file for each complaint.
6. Place the complaint before the Chairman for further proceedings.
7. Coordinate communication between the Chairman, ICC members and other concerned persons.

8. Maintain records of notices, meeting minutes, statements, documents and inquiry reports.
9. Monitor the progress of the complaint and maintain records of action taken.
10. Prepare periodic statistical information and the annual report, ensuring that confidential information is protected.

Suggested complaint register format

Sl. No.	Particulars
1	Confidential case number
2	Date of receipt
3	Mode of receipt
4	Category of complainant (student/employee)
5	Brief subject of complaint (restricted access)
6	Date placed before Chairman
7	Date of ICC proceedings
8	Status of inquiry
9	Date of submission of report
10	Action taken status

The register and case files should be maintained securely, with access restricted to authorized persons.
Objective: To establish an organized, traceable and confidential system for managing complaints.

3. Review of Complaint and Convening of ICC Meeting

Responsible Officer: Dr. M. Padmalalitha – Chairman, ICC

After the complaint is registered, the Member Secretary places it before the Chairman. The Chairman provides leadership and ensures that the complaint is processed according to the applicable regulations.

Responsibilities of the Chairman

1. Review the complaint to understand its nature and the issues raised.
2. Ensure that the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the ICC.
3. Direct the Member Secretary to initiate the necessary procedural steps.
4. Convene an ICC meeting as required.
5. Ensure that the appropriate ICC members are involved in the proceedings.
6. Ensure that the external members participate in the inquiry as required.
7. Ensure that the inquiry is conducted fairly, impartially and without bias.
8. Guide the proceedings while ensuring that the complainant and respondent receive a fair opportunity to present their respective positions.

Role of the ICC meeting

During the meeting, the Committee may:

- Review the complaint and identify the issues requiring examination.
- Determine the appropriate inquiry procedure.
- Identify relevant documents and witnesses.
- Plan the communication and hearing process.
- Consider whether any interim relief or support is required under applicable provisions.
- Record the proceedings in confidential minutes.

The Chairman shall ensure that the inquiry is conducted by the Committee in accordance with the applicable statutory procedure.

Objective: To formally initiate the inquiry process and ensure that the complaint is handled by the duly constituted ICC.

4. Inquiry by ICC Members and External Members

This is the most important stage of the complaint-handling mechanism. The ICC examines the complaint, collects relevant information and conducts an impartial inquiry.

The inquiry should be conducted collectively by the duly constituted Committee, rather than by an individual member acting independently.

A. Examination of the complaint

- The Committee examines the allegations and the information submitted by the complainant.
- It identifies the specific issues that require investigation.
- It determines what additional information or supporting documents may be necessary.

B. Communication to the respondent

- The respondent is informed of the allegations through the prescribed procedure.
- A reasonable opportunity is provided to submit a written explanation or response.
- The respondent is informed about the inquiry proceedings in accordance with applicable rules.

C. Collection of evidence

The ICC may examine relevant material, including:

- Written statements of the complainant and respondent.
- Statements of witnesses, wherever relevant.
- Emails, messages and other electronic communications.
- Documents, photographs or other supporting records.
- Any other relevant material connected with the complaint.

All information must be collected and examined in a fair and confidential manner.

D. Hearing of both parties

The Committee shall provide a reasonable opportunity to both parties to present their respective versions.

- The complainant shall be allowed to explain the allegations.
- The respondent shall be given an opportunity to respond.
- Relevant witnesses may be examined.
- Clarifications may be sought wherever necessary.
- The Committee shall consider the available evidence objectively.

The inquiry must follow the principles of natural justice. Neither party should be prejudged.

E. Role of External Members

As included in the University ICC composition, the external members are:

1. Mrs. Chaya Devi – Advocate, Rajampet.
2. Dr. Haritha Garlapati – Psychiatrist, Amritha Mind Care, Kadapa.

Their participation supports the inquiry through external expertise.

External Member	Proposed area of support
Advocate	Legal guidance, procedural fairness and interpretation of relevant provisions

Psychiatrist	Psychological support and counselling guidance, where appropriate

The external members participate in the ICC process in accordance with their membership and applicable regulations. Counselling support should be voluntary and should not replace or influence the independent inquiry.

F. Confidentiality during inquiry

The Committee shall ensure that:

- The identity of the complainant, respondent and witnesses is protected.
- Details of the complaint are not disclosed to unauthorized persons.
- Inquiry records are maintained securely.
- Members do not discuss the case outside authorized proceedings.
- No person is subjected to intimidation, pressure or retaliation for participating in the inquiry.

Objective: To establish the facts through a fair, unbiased and confidential inquiry.

5. Preparation of Inquiry Report and Recommendations

Responsible authority: Internal Complaints Committee collectively

After completing the inquiry, the ICC examines the statements, documents and other evidence collected during the proceedings.

Based on its examination, the Committee prepares a formal inquiry report containing its findings and recommendations.

Contents of the inquiry report

The report should normally include:

1. Confidential case number and relevant complaint particulars.
2. Brief background and nature of the complaint.
3. Composition of the ICC members involved in the proceedings.
4. Summary of the allegations.
5. Response submitted by the respondent.
6. Details of the inquiry proceedings and hearings conducted.
7. Summary of the evidence and statements examined.
8. Findings of the Committee based on the evidence.
9. Conclusions reached by the ICC.
10. Recommendations for appropriate action, wherever warranted.

Important points

- The report must be based on the evidence and proceedings.
- The findings must be arrived at collectively by the ICC.
- The recommendations should be consistent with applicable statutory provisions and University rules.
- The report must be signed and authenticated in accordance with the applicable procedure.
- The Member Secretary shall maintain a confidential copy of the report.

The inquiry report and recommendations shall be submitted to the competent University authority within the prescribed statutory timeline.

Objective: To provide a documented, evidence-based conclusion and recommendations for further action.

6. Action by the Competent University Authority

Responsible authority: Competent University Authority

After receiving the inquiry report, the competent University authority examines the findings and recommendations submitted by the ICC.

Responsibilities of the University authority

1. Receive and acknowledge the inquiry report.
2. Examine the ICC findings and recommendations.
3. Consider the recommendations in accordance with applicable statutory provisions.
4. Issue appropriate directions for implementation of the recommended action.
5. Ensure that the action is completed within the prescribed timeline.
6. Communicate the decision to the concerned parties as required.
7. Ensure that necessary administrative action is taken in accordance with University rules.
8. Ensure that the Member Secretary records the action taken and maintains the relevant documentation.

Possible outcomes

Depending on the findings and applicable provisions, the outcome may include:

- Appropriate disciplinary action, where allegations are established.
- Other corrective measures as permitted under the applicable regulations.
- Recommendations for counselling or support, wherever appropriate.
- Closure of the complaint where allegations are not established, in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

The University authority must act in accordance with the applicable law and cannot arbitrarily disregard the statutory responsibilities of the ICC.

Objective: To ensure that the recommendations of the ICC are considered and implemented through appropriate University action.

7. Follow-up, Monitoring and Record Maintenance

Although shown as the final stage in the flowchart, follow-up and record maintenance are continuous responsibilities of the Member Secretary and ICC.

Responsibilities

- Maintain the confidential complaint register.
- Preserve inquiry reports and supporting documents.
- Record the action taken by the competent authority.
- Monitor implementation of recommendations.
- Maintain records of complaints received, pending and disposed of.
- Prepare the annual compliance report.
- Submit the required annual report to the appropriate authority, as applicable.
- Review the functioning of the ICC and identify areas for improvement.

8. Preventive and Awareness Activities of ICC

The ICC's responsibility is not limited to receiving and investigating complaints. It also has an important preventive role in creating awareness and promoting a safe campus environment.

The Committee should organize the following activities:

Sl. No.	Activity	Suggested frequency
1	Awareness programme on sexual harassment and ICC functioning	Every semester
2	Orientation for newly admitted students	At the beginning of the academic year
3	Gender sensitization programmes	Every semester
4	Awareness on POSH Act and UGC regulations	Annually
5	Display of ICC contact details and complaint procedure	Continuous
6	Awareness programmes for teaching and non-teaching staff	Annually
7	Review of ICC functioning and pending matters	Quarterly
8	Preparation of annual compliance report	Annually

9. Important Institutional Safeguards

The following safeguards should be followed throughout the complaint-handling process:

1. **Confidentiality:** All complaint-related information must be protected.
2. **Impartiality:** No member should act with personal bias or prejudice.
3. **Natural justice:** Both parties must receive a fair opportunity to present their cases.
4. **Non-retaliation:** No complainant or witness should face intimidation or victimization for participating in the proceedings.
5. **Timely action:** Complaints must be processed within the timelines prescribed under applicable regulations.
6. **Documentation:** All proceedings, reports and action taken must be properly recorded.
7. **Collective decision-making:** Findings and recommendations must be those of the ICC as a Committee.

10. Overall Responsibility Matrix

Annamacharya University's ICC operational mechanism document.

Stage	Responsible person / authority	Main responsibility
1.Complaint receipt	Chairman / authorized ICC member	Receive complaint and ensure forwarding to Member Secretary
2. Registration	Dr. N. R. Gowthami, Member Secretary	Register, assign case number and maintain records
3.Review and meeting	Dr. M. Padma Lalitha, Chairman	Review complaint and convene ICC

4. Inquiry	All participating ICC members and external members	Conduct impartial inquiry and examine evidence
5. Inquiry report	ICC collectively	Prepare findings and recommendations
6. Implementation	Competent University authority	Consider recommendations and take appropriate action
7. Follow-up	Member Secretary / ICC	Monitor action taken and maintain records

Important Regulatory Note

The above is an operational explanation of the flowchart based on the University order. Before formally adopting it as the University's statutory ICC procedure, the University should verify the constitution and functioning of the Committee against the applicable UGC Regulations, 2015 and POSH Act, 2013.

In particular, the University should verify the prescribed composition, eligibility of the Presiding Officer, representation of non-teaching employees and students, external-member eligibility, tenure and inquiry timelines. Any required changes to the constitution should be made through a revised University order after appropriate approval.

Suggested concluding paragraph for the University document

The Internal Complaints Committee of Annamacharya University shall function as an independent and impartial institutional mechanism to prevent and address complaints of sexual harassment. All complaints shall be received, registered, examined and processed through the prescribed procedure, ensuring confidentiality, fairness and adherence to applicable statutory regulations. The Member Secretary shall coordinate the administrative process and maintain confidential records, while the Chairman shall oversee the proceedings. The ICC shall collectively conduct inquiries and submit its findings and recommendations to the competent University authority for appropriate action. In addition to complaint redressal, the Committee shall organize regular awareness and gender sensitization programmes to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive campus environment.

ANNAMACHARYA UNIVERSITY

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION; SERVICE TO SOCIETY

(ESTD, UNDER AP PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES (ESTABLISHMENT AND REGULATION) ACT, 2016)

Rajampet, Kadapa District, A.P – 516126, INDIA

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE -CONFIDENTIAL COMPLAINT REGISTER FORM

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL – FOR ICC OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Confidential Case Number: _____

Date of Receipt: ____ / ____ / _____

Sl. No.	Particulars	Details to be filled in
1	Confidential Case Number	
2	Date of Receipt	
3	Mode of Receipt (Written Complaint / Official ICC Email / Direct Submission)	
4	Category of Complainant (Student / Teaching Staff / Non-Teaching Staff / Other)	
5	Brief Subject of Complaint (Restricted Access)	
6	Date Placed Before the Chairman	
7	Date of ICC Proceedings / Meeting	
8	Status of Inquiry (Pending / Under Inquiry / Completed)	
9	Date of Submission of Inquiry Report	
10	Action Taken Status (Pending / Under Process / Completed)	

ADDITIONAL REMARKS / FOLLOW-UP DETAILS

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_____

_____

VERIFICATION AND RECORD

Recorded by (Member Secretary):

Name: Dr. N. R. Gowthami

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Reviewed by (Chairman, ICC):

Name: Dr. M. Padmalalitha

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / _____

CONFIDENTIALITY DECLARATION

The information recorded in this register is strictly confidential and shall be accessed only by authorized ICC members for official purposes. The identity of the complainant, respondent and witnesses, and all details relating to the complaint and inquiry, shall be protected in accordance with applicable statutory provisions.

Record Maintenance: Member Secretary, Internal Complaints Committee, Annamacharya University.