


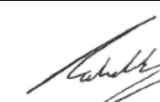


TASKEEN HEALTH INITIATIVE

**ANTI-HARRASSMENT AND
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Prepared By	Department: Human Resource	Date: 27th April, 2020
Approved By COO/CEO	Signature: 	Date: 30th April, 2020

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3rd Floor, Plot # 73C, Jami Commercial, 8th Commercial Street, Phase 7, DHA, Karachi, 75500
0316-8275336
hello@taskeen.org
www.taskeen.org

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ANTI-HARASSMENT & NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

At Taskeen Health Initiative, we are deeply committed to fostering a workplace culture rooted in respect, equity, and inclusion. We believe that every individual deserves to work in an environment that upholds their dignity, protects their rights, and values their unique contributions.

Harassment and discrimination in any form, whether based on gender, race, religion, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic, are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This policy reflects our zero-tolerance stance toward all behaviors that compromise the safety, well-being, and equality of our team.

We are dedicated to promoting accountability and fairness at all levels of the organization, ensuring that all concerns are addressed swiftly, sensitively, and without retaliation. This commitment is essential to our mission of creating positive impact and upholding the principles of mental health and human rights that are central to our work.

SCOPE

The policy is applicable to all permanent, temporary, part-time or contractual employees and consultants or third parties working for and with the organization. As subjected to the policy, they are expected to follow these principles of equality. Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

The policy also explicitly covers digital communication and online spaces, including social media platforms, email correspondence, and virtual workspaces.

1. CHARACTERISTICS

The Law and the policies of Taskeen prohibit disparate treatment on the basis of sex or any other protected characteristic, with regard to terms, conditions, privileges and perquisites of employment. Below are the few characteristics which promote awareness of possible implications of our organization practices on the delivery of organizational responsibilities.

- Gender
- Non-discrimination
- Harassment / Sexual Harassment
- Grievances

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The policy acknowledges intersectionality, recognizing that multiple forms of discrimination (e.g., gender and disability, race and sexual orientation) can overlap.

1.1. Gender

Taskeen Health Initiative affirms its commitment to gender equality by promoting an environment that values and respects individuals of all gender identities and expressions. Discrimination or bias based on gender, gender identity, or gender expression will not be tolerated in any form. This includes unequal treatment in hiring, compensation, job assignments, promotions, training opportunities, or any workplace conditions.

We promote gender-sensitive communication, equitable participation, and representation across all levels of the organization. All staff are expected to actively contribute to creating a workplace culture that upholds the principles of gender equity and inclusion.

Taskeen is committed to taking the necessary steps towards achieving this goal, in particular recognizing that:

- Social and political instability may affect men and women differently and that Taskeen's assistance may also have a different impact on men and women.
- Taskeen operates in a wide variety of cultures; as such it needs to take a culturally sensitive approach with regards to mainstreaming a gender perspective in the organization's work.
- The full participation of both men and women in all Taskeen activities not only ensures gender equality, but also increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the organization.
- Although the primary task of Taskeen is to ensure gender sensitivity in their existing programs, they may also implement projects to assist special groups of men or women, if local situations so require.
- Formulate measures to ensure that gender-specific vulnerabilities and capacities of men and women are systematically identified and addressed.
- Ensure that reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming are put in place. This includes performance evaluations, budget allocation analysis and actions to enable the full participation of men and women on an equal and meaningful basis in Taskeen's activities at all levels.
- Increasing awareness and skills of staff and volunteers in considering the social differences between vulnerable men and women when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programs.
- Ensuring equal opportunities among female and male staff members and volunteers in the areas of recruitment, promotion, benefits, training and working conditions.
- The board of Taskeen is responsible for assessing the implications of their policies and decisions for men and women, and thus ensuring that all Taskeen policies and programs are gender sensitive.

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1.2. Non-Discrimination

The Non-discrimination policy of Taskeen is governed by the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Act 1973 (specific reference to Article 27, 34 & 38), ILO Conventions on Discrimination (100), Equal Remuneration (111), Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979 and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which make it unlawful to discriminate against anyone in pre and post-employment matters on the bases of age, disability, gender (or sex), race, color, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership etc.

Taskeen prohibits any such discrimination and management will be responsible for:

- Taskeen recognizes that social and political instability may affect men and women differently, and its programs may also have different impacts based on gender.
- The organization operates in diverse cultural settings and takes a culturally sensitive approach when integrating gender perspectives into its work.
- Ensuring the active and equal participation of both men and women in all activities improves not only gender equality but also the overall effectiveness of Taskeen's work.
- While gender sensitivity should be embedded in all existing programs, Taskeen may also implement targeted initiatives for specific groups of men or women when local needs require it.
- Measures will be developed to identify and respond to gender-specific vulnerabilities and strengths in the communities served.
- Systems for monitoring and accountability in gender mainstreaming will be established, including performance evaluations, analysis of budget allocations, and actions to promote equal participation of men and women in all aspects of Taskeen's activities.
- Staff and volunteers will receive training to increase their understanding of how social differences between men and women affect program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Equal opportunities will be ensured for both female and male staff and volunteers in recruitment, promotions, benefits, training, and working conditions.
- The board of Taskeen is responsible for evaluating the gender implications of all policies and decisions to ensure gender sensitivity across the organization.

1.3. Harassment

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment can be verbal, written or physical conduct that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Harassing conduct includes negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts, denigrating jokes and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion

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toward an individual or group that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the Taskeen premises or circulated in the workplace, on company time or using company equipment by email, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites or other means.

1.4. Sexual Harassment

Taskeen Health Initiative maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment in any form. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive work environment. It is a form of discrimination and is strictly prohibited under federal, provincial, and local laws.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors, regardless of whether they are verbal, non-verbal, physical, or visual, and whether they occur between individuals of the same or different genders:

- Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors
- Sexually suggestive jokes, remarks, or innuendo
- Verbal abuse or commentary of a sexual nature
- Comments about someone's body, appearance, or sexual abilities
- Whistling, leering, or unwelcome touching
- Insulting or obscene gestures or language
- Displaying sexually explicit materials or objects in the workplace

Such behavior is strictly unacceptable, whether it occurs in the office, in virtual spaces, during fieldwork, or in any other work-related context.

1.4.1. Organizational Responsibility and Enforcement

- Taskeen Management holds all staff, including supervisors and line managers, accountable for upholding and enforcing this policy.
- All supervisors and team leads must ensure that employees under their supervision are clearly informed and trained about Taskeen's Harassment Policy and their responsibilities under it.
- Taskeen is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful work environment where employees feel confident and protected when reporting harassment or related concerns.
- All complaints will be taken seriously and addressed promptly, confidentially, and impartially. Disciplinary actions for substantiated cases will range from formal warnings to termination of employment, depending on the severity.

1.4.2. Employee Expectations

- All employees are expected and obligated to comply with this policy without exception.

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- Politeness, professionalism, and respect are non-negotiable behavioral standards at Taskeen.
- Employees must actively support the enforcement of this policy and fully cooperate with any investigations or procedures related to harassment claims.
- Failure to report, prevent, or address harassment as required may result in disciplinary consequences for bystanders, managers, or anyone found complicit.

1.5. Grievances

Taskeen Health Initiative recognizes that workplace conflicts and grievances may arise from time to time. While some conflict can be constructive when addressed respectfully, unresolved or poorly managed conflict can negatively impact morale, trust, and productivity.

A grievance is defined as any concern, complaint, or dissatisfaction raised by a staff member regarding their work experience that they believe is unfair, unjust, unreasonable, or inappropriate.

All grievances, regardless of their nature, will be taken seriously and handled in a manner that ensures confidentiality, fairness, and timely resolution.

1.5.1. Types of Grievances

Grievances generally fall into two key categories:

1.5.1.1 Non-Legal/Policy-Based Grievances

These include issues that do not necessarily breach any laws but still cause distress or tension. Examples include:

- Interpersonal conflict
- Inappropriate or unprofessional behavior
- Biased or inconsistent application of policies, procedures, or decisions

1.5.1.2. Potentially Unlawful Grievances

These involve conduct that may violate the law, including:

- Discrimination or harassment (sexual, verbal, or otherwise)
- Retaliation or victimization
- Corruption, fraud, misadministration, or serious misconduct
- Breaches of occupational health and safety standards

Every employee has the right to raise a grievance without fear of retaliation, discrimination, or negative consequences. Taskeen is committed to providing a safe and respectful space where staff can report concerns in confidence.

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2. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Taskeen Health Initiative recognizes that workplace harassment, discrimination, and gender-based bias, conflicts, can deeply impact employee morale, trust, and well-being. The organization is committed to ensuring that every complaint is addressed with seriousness, sensitivity, and confidentiality.

2.1. Reporting a Complaint

Any individual who believes they have been subjected to harassment, discrimination, and gender-based bias or who has witnessed such behavior in the workplace, is encouraged to report the matter as soon as possible. Concerns may initially be shared with the individual's immediate supervisor or the Head of Human Resources (HR). In cases where the complaint involves the supervisor, or the complainant feels unsafe approaching them, the employee may bypass this step and escalate the matter directly to the Head of HR or, in highly sensitive or senior-level cases, directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

Taskeen encourages early reporting. Prompt reporting enables the organization to take timely, constructive action to resolve issues before they escalate. While there is no strict deadline for filing a complaint, timely submission supports effective investigation and resolution.

Step 1: Informal Discussion with Immediate Supervisor

- The employee shall first raise the complaint with their immediate supervisor.
- The supervisor is responsible for discussing the matter with the employee and providing a response within five (5) working days.
- If the supervisor's response is unsatisfactory or if the complaint is against the supervisor, the employee may proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Formal Complaint to Human Resources (HR)

- If the issue remains unresolved, the employee shall submit a written complaint to the Head of HR within five (5) working days of receiving the supervisor's response or lack thereof.
- The written complaint must outline the nature of the grievance and the resolution sought.
- The Head of HR will investigate the matter and issue a written response within five (5) working days.
- If the complaint is against the Head of HR, the employee may proceed directly to Step 3.

Step 3: Escalation to Chief Operating Officer (COO) / Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

- If the grievance is still not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, it may be escalated to the COO or CEO.
- The COO/CEO will conduct a thorough investigation and provide a written response within five (5) working days of receiving the complaint.

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- If the complaint is against the COO or CEO, the employee may proceed directly to Step 4.

Step 4: Escalation to the Board of Directors

- If the complaint remains unresolved or if it involves senior management (COO/CEO), the matter shall be referred to the Board of Directors.
- The complaint must be submitted in writing or verbally to the Chairperson of the Board.
- The Board will conduct a fair and impartial review, which may include forming a special committee or appointing an external investigator.
- The employee will be given an opportunity to present their case.
- A decision will be communicated within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the complexity of the issue.
- The Board's decision shall be final and binding within the framework of organizational policy.

2.2. Investigation Procedure

Upon receiving a formal complaint, Taskeen will form an Internal Investigation Committee to handle the matter. The committee will consist of two to three impartial members, selected based on their neutrality and understanding of the issue. Where applicable, at least one female member will be included to ensure gender sensitivity. Members who have any direct or indirect conflict of interest with either party will not be allowed to participate in the investigation.

The committee will carry out a thorough investigation, which may include private interviews with the complainant, the accused, and any witnesses. It will also include a review of any documentary evidence relevant to the case. The entire process will be documented in writing. The investigation is expected to be completed within ten (10) to fifteen (15) working days, depending on the nature and complexity of the case.

2.3. Confidentiality and Protection

All efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of both the complainant and the accused throughout the process. The identity of either party will be disclosed only on a strict need-to-know basis. Interim protective measures, such as temporary reassignments or changes in reporting lines, may be applied to ensure the safety and comfort of the complainant. Any form of retaliation or intimidation, whether direct or indirect, against the complainant, witnesses, or those participating in the investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

2.4. Decision and Disciplinary Action

Following the investigation, the findings will be submitted to the relevant authority, whether the COO, CEO, or Board, for review. Based on the nature and severity of the findings, the organization may take a range of corrective actions. These may include verbal or written warnings, counseling, suspension, termination of employment, or legal proceedings where

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warranted. Both the complainant and the accused will be informed of the final decision in writing.

2.5. Protection from Retaliation

Taskeen maintains a zero-tolerance policy against retaliation. Employees who report incidents in good faith or who cooperate with an investigation will be protected from any form of adverse employment action, harassment, or victimization. Any retaliation will be treated as a separate violation of policy and will be addressed with appropriate disciplinary measures.

3. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

An employee filing a complaint shall have at every “step” the right to present witnesses and evidence to support his/her complaint. Since the processing of a complaint is not a legal matter, an attorney may not represent either the employee filing a complaint or Taskeen. Employees are not to be penalized in any way for proper use of the Complaint Procedure. Time spent in complaint discussions with the administration would be considered time worked with pay.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION

- All matters will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Retaliation against any individual who reports an incident or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will be grounds for disciplinary action.

5. DISCLAIMER

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or gender differences (as opposed to complaints intentionally) may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

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