HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

H-9, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN, Website: http://www.hec.gov.pk

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Subject: **IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY ON PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Dear Vice Chancellor / Rector / Head of Institution,

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

The provision of a safe and conducive environment, free from all forms of harassment, is essential for ensuring the protection of rights and dignity of individuals and fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. This is particularly important in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where students, faculty and other members of the academic community must be able to pursue their academic and professional activities without fear of discrimination, intimidation or harassment. In this regard, "HEC's Policy on Protection Against Harassment in Higher Education Institutions (Revised 2025)" (hereinafter referred to as the Policy) provides a comprehensive framework for the prevention and redressal of harassment in HEIs.

02. The Policy was formulated pursuant to the mandate conferred upon HEC under the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002, and provides a comprehensive framework for the prevention and prohibition of harassment in HEIs, including mechanisms for the reporting, inquiry and redressal of complaints. The Policy outlines the responsibilities of HEIs in ensuring a harassment-free academic environment and prescribes the institutional arrangements required for this purpose. Accordingly, all HEIs are required to ensure its implementation in accordance with the prescribed provisions and procedures.

03. Notwithstanding the policy framework and institutional mechanisms prescribed therein, incidents of harassment continue to be reported in HEIs, underscoring the need for effective implementation of the Policy and continued vigilance at the institutional level. In this regard, all HEIs are required to ensure that Inquiry Committees are duly constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Policy and remain functional, and that designated Focal Persons are in place to facilitate its implementation. The provisions of the Policy and the mechanisms prescribed thereunder should be adequately disseminated among students, faculty and administrative staff to ensure awareness of their respective rights, responsibilities and available avenues for reporting complaints. HEIs are also expected to undertake regular awareness and sensitisation activities, including seminars, workshops and orientation sessions, for members of their academic communities. Furthermore, all complaints of harassment are to be dealt with promptly, fairly and impartially, in accordance with the prescribed procedures, while ensuring due confidentiality and protection of the rights of all concerned. The institutional leadership is also expected to maintain appropriate oversight to ensure that the mechanisms established under the Policy remain functional and that reported cases are addressed in a timely manner.

04. In view of the foregoing, all HEIs are requested to review the status of implementation of the Policy and take appropriate measures to address any gaps or deficiencies in this regard. The matter may, accordingly, be accorded priority to ensure effective implementation of the Policy across all HEIs.

With profound regards,

(Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq)

Vice Chancellors / Rectors / Heads of Institutions
All Public & Private Universities / HEIs

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