

# Report of the Student Grievance Redressal Committee



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## STUDENT GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM

### 1. Background

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay is widely respected for its quality of education, research and innovation. It has been acknowledged as an institute of eminence [IoE] and has been producing meritorious students with excellent career paths since 1958. The students, who are the central stakeholders of this institute, get excellent facilities from our institute. A competitive environment fostered in our institute due to world-class facilities, and outstanding students may lead to ambitious goal-setting and taking on significant challenges. While this is desirable for world-class learning and producing high-class students, sometimes this also leads to issues involving students, faculty members, and staff members.

At times, it is difficult for the student to bring up the issue to the notice of an appropriate institute authority due to the sensitive nature of the problem, fear of coming into the public glare, fear of getting victimized, and bureaucratic complexities. Having a redressal mechanism in place will help appropriate channelization of grievances and give a proper structure to the issue.

In such cases, to ensure grievance redressal of the student community and with proper care and sensitivity, the student grievance redressal mechanism is proposed in alignment with the **Institute Strategic Plan 2017-22 action point #4** to enhance the student experience.

### 2. Overview

There are many situations where students may have grievances of various kinds. It is important to have a redressal mechanism in place, which will help in appropriate channelization of grievances, and help in timely problem resolution. Hence, it is necessary for IITB to have a formal students' grievance redressal mechanism.

#### 2.1 Grievances by Students

There are different kinds of issues faced by students during their stay at the institute. These issues/grievances can be categorized into various buckets as follows:

- A) **Academic Grievances**: This group of grievances includes all the problems faced by students and faculty members in the sphere of academics and related activities. Specific problems related to course conduct, examinations, classroom conduct, grading, and projects are included.
- B) **Administrative Grievances**: This group of grievances will include all the problems faced due to administrative issues like course registration, fees, dues adjustments, etc. The significant subgroups here will be the grievances that involve the academic section and the faculty advisors.
- C) **PhD student Grievances**: This group includes all problems between PhD students and their respective guides, like being unprofessional, non-responsive, degrading, etc. Other grievances with the department or institute administration would also be included.

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- D) Social life-based Grievances: This group consists of all the problems faced by students in their social life and their interactions with different stakeholders in the institute. These will include all the problems like ragging, harassment (including sexual harassment), unprofessional behavior, discrimination, etc.
- E) Non-Academic Grievances: This group of grievances includes all problems related to extracurricular activities like cultural clubs and sports activities.
- F) Hostel-related Grievances: This group includes all the problems faced by students faced in and around the hostels. These might include problems related to staying conditions, health, and hygiene, hostel staff, etc.

The issues handled (or being handled) by Gender Cell, SC/ST cell, PwD cell, Anti ragging committee and various disciplinary action committees (DACs) do not fall under the purview of this redressal mechanism.

### 2.2 Salient Features of the Redressal Mechanism

The specific features of the grievance redressal mechanism are as follows:

1. **Student Grievance Consultative Committee [SGCC]** acquaints the student with the current redressal mechanisms and appropriate authorities to raise the grievance with. This committee may serve as the first point of contact for students. Its major role will be to guide the aggrieved students by making them aware of the current redressal mechanisms.
2. **Department Undergraduate Committee [DUGC] / Department Postgraduate Committee [DPGC]** which are already present at the departmental level to address any academic and PhD related grievances. DUGC/DPGC may constitute a sub-committee to look into grievances (if needed). These sub-committees must include a student representative.
3. **Institute Student Grievance Redressal Committee [ISGRC]** oversees the resolution of queries that don't come under the purview of DUGC / DPGC or any redressals that are escalated from DUGC / DPGC if the student is not satisfied. If needed, ISGRC may form a fact-finding committee on a case-to-case basis.
4. Decisions of the ISGRC are forwarded to the respective **implementing authority** (Heads of Academic units, or Deans) for execution.
5. Grievances that belong to the **social life-based** set (D above) need to be resolved with the respective committees like the anti-ragging Committee, disciplinary action committee, Gender Cell, SC/ST Cell, and PwD cell. Grievances that are outside the scope of these committees and are related to students' social life will be looked at by the ISGRC.
6. Grievances related to the hostel should be first resolved through the **Hostel GSec, Hostel Manager, and the Hostel Wardens**. In the case of an unsatisfactory resolution, students can reach out to the ISGRC.
7. Recommended timelines are given in respective sections.

### 3. Definition of Grievances

An 'aggrieved student' means an on-roll student of IIT Bombay, who has any grievance in the matters listed below.

Grievance means, and includes, complaint(s) made by an aggrieved student in respect of the following but not limited to:

- a. Academic grievances [including but not limited to grading, evaluation, attendance, non-compliance with UG/PG rule book, declaration of results/grades, academic dishonesty and conduct, delays in assessment, etc.]
- b. Administrative grievances [including but not limited to fines, fees, insurance, refunds, bribes, delays in processing documents, etc.]
- c. Harassment, bullying, or victimization of a student\*
- d. Lack of transparency in administrative/evaluation/penalty processes.
- e. Delayed action on legitimate appeals made by a student

*\*Excluding the cases which should be dealt with Gender Cell, SC/ST cell, PwD cell, Anti ragging committee and various disciplinary action committees (DACs).*

### 4. Grievance Redressal Committees [GRCs]

There are several existing committees that help resolve student grievances. Two new committees, i.e. SGCC and ISGRC are proposed.

#### 4.1 Student Grievance Consultative Committee [SGCC]

The SGCC would acquaint the student with the existing redressal mechanism according to the use case and/or the process to raise the grievance with the appropriate authorities.

The SGCC will consist of either the following student representatives, or their nominees. If the students face any issues, they can reach out to any of the following student representatives for clarification and guidance on further action.\*

- a. General Secretary Academic Affairs (UG)
- b. General Secretary Academic Affairs (PG)
- c. General Secretary Hostel Affairs

\* Contact information for these student representatives and the SGCC would be made available on the student gymkhana website.

#### 4.2 Department Undergraduate Committee [DUGC] / Department Postgraduate Committee [DPGC]

[1] Any academic grievance by an aggrieved student relating to a Department, School, or Centre shall be addressed to the DUGC / DPGC.

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- [2] The DUGC or DPGC of the Department, School, or Centre can opt for forming a subcommittee to address the cases, so as to effectively manage the workload in this regard.
- [3] The faculty advisor of the aggrieved student shall be an invitee to the proceedings as desired.
- [4] Each subcommittee should have a committee secretary who would be an administrative staff from the Department Office and would be responsible for carrying out all the administrative duties of the committee, including time logging for the various steps of the redressal process
- [5] It is mandatory to include the Department General Secretary and the Department Academic Mentorship Program Coordinators (in case of undergraduate complainants) in the committee.\*
- [6] Only at the student's request the composition can include GSAA (UG), or GSAA (PG), but **this is not mandatory**.

\*Depending on the degree of aggrieved students, the composition can include UG Representative or a PG representative.

### 4.3 Institute Student Grievance Redressal Committee [ISGRC]

The mandate of the committee:

[A] When a grievance does not relate to any academic Department, School, or Centre of IIT Bombay the matter shall be referred to the Institute Student Grievance Redressal Committee [ISGRC] directly.

[B] When a student does not receive a satisfactory response or grievance redressal from the DUGC /DPGC, they can appeal to the ISGRC.

[C] The Head of a department or Centre can also refer grievances to the ISGRC if they cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the departmental level.

- The ISGRC, constituted by the Chairperson, Senate, would have the following composition:
  - a. Faculty member Convener
  - b. Faculty member Co-Convener
  - c. General Secretary Academic Affairs UG  
OR their representative Member
  - d. General Secretary Academic Affairs PG  
OR their representative Member
  - e. General Secretary Hostel Affairs  
OR their representative Member

Any other student representative can be included as an invitee on a case-to-case basis.

The faculty advisor of the aggrieved student shall be an invitee to the proceedings as desired.

- The ISGRC Convener(s) and professors in the committee would be appointed by the Director for a tenure of three years.
- At least one woman faculty member should be part of ISGRC.

The ISGRC will either appoint a fact-finding committee on a case-by-case basis or they can co-opt a pool of members, and form sub-committees for handling individual complaints. The ISGRC will ensure that these committees adhere to the timeline. The fact-finding committee would be dissolved once the report is finalized.

### 5. Implementing Authority

Once a decision has been made regarding the action for a grievance, it should be signed off by any of the following institute functionaries (implementing authority). The committee would decide the signing authority (implementing authority) based on the nature of the complaint.

- a. Director
- b. Deputy Director, Academic, and Infrastructural Affairs
- c. Deputy Director, Financial and External Affairs
- d. Dean, Faculty Affairs
- e. Dean, Academic Programs
- f. Dean, Student Affairs
- g. Dean, International Relations
- h. Dean, Administrative Affairs
- i. Dean, Infrastructure Planning and Support
- j. Heads of Departments

### 6. Process for Redressal of Grievances

#### 6.1 Related to a particular academic unit

1. An aggrieved student can first approach their faculty advisor or SGCC or the Head of their academic unit.
2. An aggrieved student should provide a written application in signed hard copy + optional soft copy to the Head of the Academic Unit, detailing the nature of the grievance, and the people conflicted with the grievance. If there is a conflict of interest involving the Convener, the student can submit the grievance through one of the members of the committee, post which, for that case, the committee is reconstituted.
3. If a grievance is reported to the DUGC / DPGC by an aggrieved student which does not relate to the Department, School, or Center of IIT Bombay the matter shall be referred to the Institute Grievance Consultative Committee [ISGRC] by the Head of the Department.
4. The aggrieved student may either appear in person or online.

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5. In all cases, the quorum shall be 50 % of the members of the committee. At least one of the student members should be present at the meeting.
6. While dealing with the grievance, the Committee shall observe the spirit of natural justice and hear all sides of the issue.
7. The DUGC/DPGC shall be convened normally within **30 days** during semester time (vacation period not counted), of the receipt of the application post reconstitution [removing conflicted members, if any] and discuss the grievance. In case of any urgency, the committee should be convened within 10 days even if during vacation. If there is an unavoidable delay to convene the DUGC/DPGC within the stipulated time, HoD shall inform the student about the same in writing/email within 10 days of receipt of the complaint.
8. The decision is normally expected to be made within **30 days** of the first meeting.
9. Within **10 days** of the decision,
  - a. The decision of the committee should be communicated to the aggrieved student and defendant if applicable.
  - b. If the power of implementation lies under the purview of the HoD, the HoD should start the implementation, otherwise the recommendations should be submitted to the relevant institute functionaries for implementation, with a copy sent to the student.
10. The aggrieved student or the defendant can appeal for reconsideration to the ISGRC within **10 days** of communication of the recommendations/decisions.
11. The Committee should take appropriate actions to protect the aggrieved student from facing any unwarranted repercussions because of registering a grievance. Similar measures should be put in place to protect the student members of the committee if needed.
12. In case any frivolous grievances are registered, the committee should take appropriate action against the complainant.
13. It is highly recommended that the committee follows the timeline laid out above. However, if the committee decides that the particular grievance demands a different timeline for redressal, they must lay out a revised timeline and inform the student.
14. The aggrieved student or the accused can appeal to the ISGRC or Appellate Authority if the grievance isn't being acted upon within the given timeline.

### 6.2 Related to a particular hostel

An aggrieved student should first try to solve the grievance through the already existent mechanism via the hostel general Secretary, Hostel Manager, Warden. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, they can approach the ISGRC.

An aggrieved student should provide a signed hard copy application with optional soft copy to the Convenor of the ISGRC, detailing the nature of the grievance, and the people conflicted with the grievance. If the Convenor is conflicted due to interest, the student can submit the grievance through one of the members of the committee post which, in that case, the committee is reconstituted.



### 6.3 Not related to a specific academic unit

An aggrieved student should first try to solve the grievance through the existing mechanisms, such as Gender Cell, SC/ST Student Cell, PwD student cell, etc. If the complaint does not fall under the scope of any of the above, the student may approach ISGRC.

### 6.4 Complaints received directly by the ISGRC

1. Any complaints that do not come under the purview of the DUGC/DPGC, or have been forwarded by the DUGC/DPGC or have been sent directly to the ISGRC will be handled by the ISGRC.
2. An aggrieved student should provide a signed hard copy with optional soft copy application to the convener of the ISGRC, detailing the nature of the grievance, and the people conflicted with the grievance. If the Convenor is conflicted due to interest, the student can submit the grievance through one of the members of the committee, post which, for that case, the committee is reconstituted after taking approval from the Director.
3. In all cases, the quorum shall be 50 % of the committee members. At least one of the student members should be present at the meeting.
4. The ISGRC shall be convened within **10 days** of the receipt of the application post reconstitution [removing conflicted members, if any and discuss the grievance and the need for forming an FFC.
5. In case the committee agrees that there is no need for forming an FFC, in NO case shall the committee take **more than 45 days** to make a decision.
6. If an FFC is formed,
  - a. It must convene within **7 days**. It is strongly urged that the FFC submit a report to the ISGRC within **21 days**. In NO case shall the FFC take more than **45 days** to submit the report.
  - b. The quorum shall be 50 % of the committee members.
  - c. At least one of the student members should be present at all meetings.
  - d. After receiving the report of FFC, the ISGRC must arrive at a decision within **10 days** and submit it to the approving/implementing authority.
7. The ISGRC shall submit its recommendations to the Implementing Authority for implementation within a period of **10 days** from the date of the last meeting.
8. After the recommendations of ISGRC are approved, the student and defendant, if any should be informed by the implementing authority, and implementation should be carried out within **10 days**.
9. The Committee should take appropriate actions to protect the aggrieved from facing any unwarranted repercussions because of registering a grievance. Similar measures should be put in place to protect the student members of the committee if the need be.

10. In case any frivolous grievances are registered, the committee should take appropriate action against the complainant.
11. It is highly recommended that the committee follows the timeline above. However, if the committee decides that the grievance demands a different timeline for redressal, they must outline the timeline to be followed and inform the student within **5 days** from the day the committee first convenes.

## 6.5 Record of complaints

A record of every case should be stored (either in hard copy or digitally) by the appropriate committee for a period of 5 years.

A report which summarizes the grievances anonymously should be released on a yearly basis. The report should include the following

- a. Nature of the complaint
- b. Action recommended by the committee(s) and taken
- c. Timeline of redressal

The report would help all the stakeholders involved to refer to similar cases and make a decision for all future cases.

## 7. Conclusion

The mechanisms proposed in this document may be reviewed after an initial period of 2 years to address any issues found during implementation.

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This proposal has drawn inspiration and understanding from the following references. All these references share a common spirit of resolving student grievances as the utmost priority.

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