



**VIT**<sup>®</sup>

**Vellore Institute of Technology**  
(Deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956)

# **Establishing an Ethical Ambience in the Institution**

**(Measures to inculcate Ethical  
Behaviour within VIT community)**

(Ver. 2.0)

## 1.0 Preamble

VIT aims to provide quality higher education on par with international standards. It primarily seeks to encourage advancement and application of knowledge among its members along with taking an active role in addressing real world problems through sustainable development initiatives. These purposes can be realized and manifested only by fostering mutual trust and confidence among the VIT community. This requires developing an environment that promotes ethical practices and values freedom to coexist and collaborate by respecting the rights of others. The Core Values of VIT enables it to nurture a congenial academic environment engendering competence driven by ethical standards and social equity.

## 2.0 Vision, Mission & Core values

### Vision

The vision of VIT is; **Transforming life through excellence in education and research.**

### Mission

- **World class Education:** VIT aims to achieve excellence in education, grounded in ethics and critical thinking, for improving the quality of life.
- **Cutting edge Research:** VIT seeks to promote an ecosystem that empowers innovation and creativity to extend knowledge and solve critical problems.
- **Impactful People:** VIT aims to create a congenial environment to generate happy, accountable, caring and effective workforce along with its student community.
- **Rewarding Co-creations:** VIT intends to forge an active and strong collaboration with national and international industries and universities for productivity and economic development.
- **Service to Society:** VIT seeks to provide valuable services to the region and the world through knowledge and compassion.

The **Core Values** of VIT are:

- Student focus
- Strong ethics
- Striving for excellence
- Social development
- Respect for all

It is important for all the members to be aware of and adhere to the appropriate policies, standards, rules and regulations that guide our institute culture. Each member has individual accountability towards their own actions and they are also collectively responsible for upholding these behavioural standards. This document provides a comprehensive overview of the measures undertaken by the institute to foster ethical practices within the VIT community.

Detailed below are some of the major structures initiatives of VIT to inculcate ethical behaviour within its community:

#### **4.0 Students' code of conduct**

VIT Students' code of conduct serves as a comprehensive framework that indicates the standard procedures and practices to be followed by the students of the institute. Every student is required to sign this code at the time of admission. This code of conduct helps to ensure the safety and well-being of all the members of the community. This code of conduct signifies academic integrity as a fundamental aspect of education. It reinforces the importance of honesty, integrity and ethical behaviour in academic pursuits. It also emphasizes the value of diversity, inclusivity and respect for all individuals, irrespective of their backgrounds and identities. It aspires to prepare students for professional environment by instilling professional skills and ethical principles. A separate code of conduct was also prepared for both men and women hostel inmates. Moreover, both these documents are publicly available on the institute website.

#### **5.0 Ethics through academics**

The institute has included ethics and values as a compulsory course to be attended by all the students to cultivate ethical awareness, critical thinking and decision making skills among students. The course is provided through synchronous and asynchronous manner in the form of classroom teaching and MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) respectively. The course deals with certain crucial topics like personal social responsibility, charity, corruption etc. It explains prohibited behaviours like harassment, bullying, violence or substance abuse, and provides clear guidelines for resolving conflicts and reporting incidents. It intends to provide insights on expectations regarding plagiarism, dishonesty and actions that might be regarded as academic misconduct. Multiple case studies are also discussed and analyzed, to help students to tackle issues like conflict of interest and ethical dilemma. The course is exclusively handled by the Department of Social Sciences, School of Social Sciences and Languages.

## **6.0 Research Integrity Policy**

VIT has formulated certain policies that discuss procedures for good research. It is mandatory for everyone, including students at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, employees (technical, research staff and faculty members), visiting scholars and collaborators to be aware of these policies. This policy of VIT ensures that the research conducted within the institution adheres to ethical guidelines and principles. It ensures that the research proposals and protocols meet ethical standards. It has a vital role in promoting and maintaining the research integrity of the institute. They also provide clear guidelines regarding the ethical treatment of respondents of a study and assess the potential risks and benefits associated with a research topic, including the informed consent procedures, confidentiality and ethical implications of the study. The institute research integrity policy also states the guidelines for the proper conduct of research to safeguard against dishonesty and negligence. The policy statement is available on the institute website.

## **7.0 Committee for prevention of discrimination and grievance redressal**

As per UGCs (Grievance Redressal) Regulations, 2019, it is mandatory for all higher education institutions of India to construct a committee that monitors and advises the institute against all forms of discrimination within the institution. The committee ensures strict action against discrimination in relation to gender, race, caste, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief, age, or disability amongst employees as well as students of the Institute. It provides a platform for the VIT community to express their concerns and seek resolution. It functions independently while dealing with any issue and offers an impartial and unbiased solution. It ensures that all parties involved are heard and treated equitably. A detailed document of VIT's grievance redressal policy is available on the institute website.

## **8.0 Internal complaints committee**

The primary purpose of this committee is to prevent, address and investigate issues of harassment within the institute. It aims to promote a safe and respectful work culture where people are free from any form of harassment. The committee works in accordance with the laws and regulations stated in the Constitution of India. This committee has handled several issues with utmost confidentiality, protecting the privacy of the complainant and the others involved. It seeks to encourage individuals to come forward and report incidents of harassment and other issues. The committee ensures to conduct training sessions, workshops and awareness campaign on POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) Act, 2013 to promote a

better understanding of sexual harassment issue, prevention strategies and the complaint redressal procedures. These awareness sessions are arranged every year and it is mandatory for all the employees to attend the same. The contact information and the committee details are available on the institute website.

### **9.0 Anti-ragging committee**

As per UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009, it is mandatory for all universities/institutions in India to follow these regulations and constitute a committee to prevent and address such issues. Anti-Ragging Committee is constituted with Director, Students' Welfare as Chairperson; Assistant Directors, Students' Welfare as Members and nominated faculty members from each school as Coordinators. Along with the Coordinators from each school, there is a team of squad members that comprises of faculty as well as staff members. This committee plays a pivotal role in promoting a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for the student community of VIT. It helps to deter potential ragging incidents and implement preventive measures and disciplinary actions. The committee also seeks to uphold the students, code of conduct and create awareness on the legal implications, ethical concerns and psychological impact of ragging. There are CCTV cameras at every vital points of the institute to prevent and identify trouble triggers. The committee also organizes joint sensitization and orientation sessions, workshops and seminars for the freshers and senior students. They also conduct surprise inspections at hostels, canteens, recreational rooms, toilets and other strategic locations. Freshers are provided with printed pamphlets/leaflets containing the important information on seeking help and guidance from concerned authorities. There are posters on every strategic locations of the institute to provide awareness on the implications of ragging and contact information during the time of help.

### **10.0 Committee on students malpractice in examination**

The committee seeks to promote a culture of honesty and ethical behaviour among students. This committee plays a crucial role in investigating reported cases and gives an opportunity for the student to clarify their side of the story. Through the process, they educate students on the relevance of academic integrity, consequences of malpractice and ethical responsibility they hold as learners. The committee ensures to address the malpractice cases promptly and effectively to build and maintain the trust, credibility and respect for the institutional core values.

## **11.0 Office of students' welfare**

The students' welfare office was established by VIT to foster student engagement and involvement in campus life. This office plays an essential role in extending support and guidance to students throughout their academic journey. It ensures that students have necessary access to the institute resources to thrive and succeed in their educational pursuits. It is responsible for organizing various co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, clubs and events that encourage student interaction, leadership development and community engagement. It is also in charge of the counseling division of VIT which comprises of a team of professional psychologists and psychiatrists. They play a major role in promoting student well-being including their mental and emotional health. They also organize support sessions, awareness campaigns on the implications of addiction and substance abuse along with mental health issues, stress management and self-care practice. The primary purpose of counseling division is to foster a supportive environment that caters to the holistic health of the student community. The office of the students' welfare also organizes an event for presenting honesty awards to recognize the sincerity and the responsibility demonstrated by people who submit the lost and found objects at the office. The office also is proactively involved in ensuring that the students are represented in the decision making process of the institute.

## **12.0 Summary**

VIT is committed towards maintaining a community that showcase integrity and ethical behaviour. The institute encourages fair and unbiased approach towards anyone with concerns regarding policy violations to report them to the appropriate authorities. VIT strictly follows a non-retaliation policy and protects those who raise concerns with good intentions.

**Registrar**