

GOKHALE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS
(DEEMED TO BE A UNIVERSITY)
PUNE 411 004

POLICY

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)





Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics

(Founded by Rao Bahadur R.R. Kale, Satara)
(Deemed to be University u/s 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
846, Shivajinagar, B.M.C.C. Road
PUNE - 411 004 (INDIA)

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION; STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a framework for implementing the Whistle blowers Protection Act of 2014, as amended in 2015, within Gokhale Institute. This SOP aims to provide clear guidance on the process for reporting, investigating, and addressing instances of wrongdoing or corruption within the institution, while ensuring the protection of whistle blowers.
2. **Scope.** This SOP applies to all faculty, staff, students, contractors, vendors, and volunteers associated with [Educational Institution Name]. It covers disclosures of misconduct, violations of laws, regulations, or ethical standards, and any other wrongdoing that may adversely affect the interests of the institution.
3. **Definitions.**
 - **Whistle blower.** An individual who exposes or reports illegal, unethical, or fraudulent activities within an organization or government entity, typically in the public interest. Whistleblowers are protected by law from retaliation for their disclosures.
 - **Protected Disclosure.** Information provided by a whistleblower regarding suspected wrongdoing, corruption, malpractice, or illegal activities within an organization. This disclosure is usually made in good faith and is protected by law from reprisals or retaliation.
 - **Reprisal.** Any adverse action taken against a whistleblower in retaliation for making a protected disclosure. Reprisals may include termination of employment, demotion, harassment, discrimination, or other forms of retaliation aimed at discouraging whistleblowers from coming forward.
 - **Reporting Officer.** A designated individual or entity responsible for receiving, documenting, and handling protected disclosures made by whistle blowers. The reporting officer plays a crucial role in initiating investigations and ensuring that whistleblowers are protected from reprisals.

Page 1 of 4

- **Investigation**. A formal process conducted to assess the validity and seriousness of a protected disclosure and to gather evidence related to alleged wrongdoing or misconduct. Investigations may be conducted by internal or external parties and must adhere to principles of fairness, impartiality, and due process.
- **Confidentiality**. The protection of the identity of whistleblowers and the confidentiality of information provided in protected disclosures. Confidentiality is essential for ensuring the safety and integrity of whistleblowers and maintaining trust in the reporting process.
- **Privacy**. The protection of personal information and sensitive data related to whistleblowers and individuals involved in investigations. Privacy safeguards are necessary to prevent unauthorized access to confidential information and to comply with data protection laws.
- **Recordkeeping**. The systematic documentation and retention of information related to protected disclosures, investigations, and outcomes. Proper recordkeeping ensures accountability, transparency, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- **Training and Awareness**. Educational programs and initiatives designed to inform employees, stakeholders, and the public about their rights and obligations under whistleblowers protection laws. Training and awareness efforts aim to promote a culture of integrity, transparency, and accountability within organizations.

4. **Reporting Procedure**. Any individual who becomes aware of suspected wrongdoing or corruption within the institution may make a protected disclosure. Protected disclosures can be made verbally or in writing to the designated Reporting Officer. Whistle blowers may choose to remain anonymous, and their identity will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. The Reporting Officer shall acknowledge receipt of the protected disclosure and initiate the investigation process promptly. The Registrar shall be the designated Reporting Officer of the Institute.

5. **Investigation Process**. Upon receiving a protected disclosure, the Reporting Officer shall conduct a preliminary assessment to determine the credibility and seriousness of the allegations. If the allegations are deemed



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credible, an impartial investigation shall be conducted by a designated Investigating Committee or individual. The investigation shall be thorough, fair, and conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Whistle-blowers shall be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation to the extent possible without compromising confidentiality or the integrity of the process.

6. **Protection of whistle blowers.** Gokhale Institute is committed to protecting whistle blowers from reprisals, harassment, or adverse consequences for making protected disclosures. Any acts of reprisal against whistle blowers shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the institution. Whistle blowers who believe they have faced reprisals for making a protected disclosure may report such incidents to the designated Reporting Officer for investigation.

7. **Confidentiality and Privacy.** Protected disclosures and the identities of whistleblowers shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality, except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigation or as required by law. Information related to protected disclosures shall be shared only with individuals directly involved in the investigation process on a need-to-know basis.

8. **Recordkeeping and Documentation.** Records of all protected disclosures, investigations, and outcomes shall be maintained in a secure and confidential manner by the Reporting Officer. Documentation related to protected disclosures shall be retained for a period of five years or till the completion of the legal proceedings in accordance with institutional recordkeeping policies and applicable legal requirements.

9. **Training and Awareness.** Gokhale Institute shall provide regular training and awareness programs to educate members of the community about their rights and obligations under the Whistleblowers Protection Act and this SOP. Training shall include information on how to recognize and report suspected wrongdoing, the protections available to whistleblowers, and the consequences of reprisals.

10. **Review and Revision.** This SOP shall be reviewed periodically to assess its effectiveness and to incorporate any changes in legal or regulatory requirements. Amendments to the SOP shall be approved by Internal Management Committee and communicated to all stakeholders.

11. **Conclusion.** This SOP serves as a guide for implementing the Whistle blowers Protection Act within Gokhale Institute, reaffirming our commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. By providing avenues for reporting protected disclosures and ensuring the protection of whistle blowers, we strive to foster a culture of integrity and accountability within our institution.


Col Kapil Jodh
Registrar

