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**MANUAL OF STUDENTS' ETHICS AND CODE
OF CONDUCT, COTTON UNIVERSITY**

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MANUAL OF STUDENTS' ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT, COTTON UNIVERSITY

1. Preamble

This Manual indicates the standard procedures and practices of Cotton University, Panbazar, Guwahati, Assam, INDIA-781001 (hereafter called as "University") for all students enrolling with the University for pursuing varied courses. All students must know that it is incumbent upon them to abide by this Code of Conduct and Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the 'Code') and the rights, responsibilities including the restrictions flowing from it.

That the University's endeavour by means of enforcing this Code is to pioneer and administer a student discipline process that is egalitarian, conscientious, effectual, and expeditious; and providing a system which promotes student growth through individual and collective responsibility.

All students are requested to be well conversant with this Code, which is uploaded on the University's official website and shall be reviewed as and when deemed necessary.

2. Jurisdiction

- a. The University shall have the jurisdiction over the conduct of the students associated /enrolled with the University and to take cognizance of all acts of misconduct including incidents of ragging or otherwise which take place on the campus or with respect to the University related activities and functions.
- b. The University may also exercise jurisdiction over conduct which occurs off-campus violating the ideal student conduct and discipline as laid down in this Policy and other regulations, as if the conduct has occurred on campus which shall include
 - i. Any violation of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy of the University against other students of the University and in concurrence with the IC (vide Internal Complaints Committee, dated 22nd August, 2022)
 - ii. Physical assault, threats of violence, or conduct that threatens the health or safety of any person including other students of the University;
 - iii. Possession or use of weapons, explosives, or destructive devices off-campus
 - iv. Manufacture, sale, or distribution of prohibited drugs, alcohol etc.
 - v. Conduct which has a negative impact or constitutes a nuisance to members of the surrounding off-campus community.

The University while determining whether or not to exercise such off-campus jurisdiction in situations enumerated herein above, shall consider the seriousness of the alleged

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offense, the risk of harm involved, whether the victim(s) are members of the campus community and/or whether the off-campus conduct is part of a series of actions, which occurred both on, and off-campus.

3. Ethics and Conduct

3.1 This Code shall apply to all kinds of conduct of students that occurs on the University premises including all University sponsored activities, functions hosted by other recognized student organizations and any off-campus conduct that has or may have serious consequences or adverse impact on the University's interests or reputation.

3.2 At the time of admission, each student must sign a statement accepting this Code by giving an undertaking that

3.2.1 he/she shall be a regular student of the University.

3.2.2 In the event, a student is forced to discontinue studies for any legitimate reason, such a student may be relieved from the University subject to written consent of the Dean of the concerned Faculty, or as approved by the Competent Authority.

3.2.3 As a result of such relieving, the student shall be required to clear pending hostel / mess dues and if a student had joined the University on a scholarship, the said grant shall be revoked.

3.3 The University believes in promoting not merely a congenial academic environment but an overall safe and healthy ambience by enforcing behavioural standards. All students must uphold academic integrity, respect all persons and their rights, show responsible behaviour towards the safeguard of institute's property and safety of others, and display a sense belonging.

3.4 All students must deter from indulging in any form of misconduct whatsoever, including partaking in any activity off-campus which can affect the University's interests and reputation substantially. The various forms of misconduct include:

3.5 Any act of discrimination (physical or verbal conduct) based on an individual's gender, caste, race, religion or religious beliefs, colour, region, language, disability, or sexual orientation, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, gender identity, etc.

3.6 Intentionally damaging or destroying Institute property or property of fellow students and/or faculty members

3.7 Any disruptive activity in a classroom or in an event sponsored by the University

3.8 Inability to produce the identity card, issued by the University, or refusing to produce it on demand by campus security guards

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3.9 Participating in activities including but not limited to

- 3.9.1 Organizing meetings and processions without permission from the University.
- 3.9.2 Accepting membership of religious or terrorist groups banned by the Institute/Government of India or distributing pamphlets or material with communal intent
- 3.9.3 Unauthorized possession, carrying or use of any weapon, ammunition, explosives, or potential weapons, fireworks, contrary to law or policy.
- 3.9.4 Unauthorized possession or use of harmful chemicals and banned drugs
- 3.9.5 Smoking in the University premises
- 3.9.6 Possessing, Consuming, distributing, selling of alcohol in the University and/or throwing empty bottles on campus
- 3.9.7 Parking a vehicle in a no-parking zone or in area earmarked for parking other type of vehicles
- 3.9.8 Rash driving on the campus that may cause inconvenience to others
- 3.9.9 Not disclosing a pre-existing health condition, either physical or psychological, to the University authority, which may cause hindrance to academic performance.
- 3.9.10 Theft or unauthorized access to resources belonging to others or to the University.
- 3.9.11 **Misbehaviour during student body elections or during any activity of the University.**
- 3.9.12 Engaging in disorderly, lewd, or indecent conduct, including, but not limited to, creating unreasonable noise; pushing and shoving; inciting or participating in a riot or group disruption at the University or raising slogans to shame any individual, faculty or official of the University.

3.10 Students are expected not to interact, on behalf of the University, with media representatives or invite media persons on to the campus without prior permission of the University authorities.

3.11 Students are not permitted to record lectures, in either audio or video mode, in classrooms or the actions of other students, faculty, or staff without prior permission.

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3.12 Students are not permitted to provide audio and video clippings of any activity on the campus to media without prior permission.

3.13 Students are expected to use social media carefully and responsibly. They cannot post derogatory comments about other individuals from the University on the social media or indulge in any such related activities having grave ramifications on the reputation of the Institute. Theft or abuse of the University computers and other electronic resources such as computer and electronic communications facilities, systems, and services which include unauthorized entry, use, tampering, etc. of University property or facilities, private residences of staff/professors etc. offices, classrooms, computers networks, and other restricted facilities and interference with the work of others is punishable.

3.14 Damage to, or destruction of, any property of the University, or any property of others on the University premises.

3.15 Making a video/audio recording, taking photographs, or streaming audio/video of any person in a location where the person has a reasonable expectation of privacy, without that person's knowledge and/or express consent.

3.16 Indulging in any form of Harassment which is defined as a conduct that is severe and objectively, a conduct that is motivated on the basis of a person's race, colour, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition and opinions or ideology.

4. If there is a case against a student for a possible breach of code of conduct, then a committee will be formed by the Vice Chancellor to recommend a suitable disciplinary action and the committee shall inquire into the alleged violation and accordingly suggest the action to be taken against the said student. The committee may meet with the student to ascertain the misconduct and suggest one or more of the following disciplinary actions based on the nature of misconduct.

- a. **WARNING** - Indicating that the action of the said delinquent student was in violation of the Code and any further acts of misconduct shall result in severe disciplinary action.
- b. **RESTRICTIONS** -Reprimanding and Restricting access to various facilities on the campus for a specified period of time.
- c. **COMMUNITY SERVICE** - For a specified period of time to be extended if need be. However, any future misconduct along with failure to comply with any conditions imposed may lead to severe disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.
- d. **EXPULSION** - Expulsion of a student from the University permanently. Indicating prohibition from entering the University premises or participating in any student related activities or campus residences etc.

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- e. **MONETARY PENALTY** - May also include suspension or forfeiture of scholarship/fellowship for a specific time period.
 - f. **SUSPENSION** - A student may be suspended for a specified period of time which will entail prohibition on participating in student-related activities, classes, programs etc. Additionally, the student will be forbidden to use various University facilities unless permission is obtained from the Competent Authority. Suspension may also be followed by possible dismissal, along with the following additional penalties.
 - g. Ineligibility to reapply for admission to the University for a period of three years, and
 - h. Withholding the grade card/marksheet or certificate for the courses studied or work carried out
5. Notwithstanding anything contained under the following disciplinary actions and measures, as per provisions laid down in the First Statutes of Cotton University (under Clause 50), the decision of the Vice Chancellor shall be final and binding.
6. **APPEAL**: If the delinquent student is aggrieved by the imposition of any of the aforementioned penalties, he/she may appeal to the Honorable Vice-Chancellor of the University, who may decide on one of the following:
- a. accept the recommendation of the committee and impose the punishment as suggested by the Committee or modify and impose any of the punishments as stipulated in this Code which is commensurate with the gravity of the proved misconduct, Or
 - b. Refer the case back to the committee for reconsideration.

In any case the Vice Chancellor's decision is final and binding in all the cases where there is a possible misconduct by a student.

7. Academic Integrity

As a premier higher education institute of the Northeastern region, the University values academic integrity and is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic Integrity encompasses honesty and responsibility and awareness relating to ethical standards for academic/ scholastic conduct and research ethics, thereof. The University believes that in all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged. Academic integrity is essential for the success of the University and its research missions, and hence, violations of academic integrity constitute a serious offence.

a. Scope and Purpose

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i. This Policy on academic integrity, which forms an integral part of the Code, applies to all students of the University who are required to adhere to the said policy. The purpose of the Policy is twofold:

- To clarify the principles of academic integrity, and to provide examples of dishonest conduct and violations of academic integrity.

ii. Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

iii. The principles of academic integrity require that a student,

1. properly acknowledges and cites use of the ideas, results, material or words of others.
2. fully acknowledges all contributors to a given piece of work.
3. makes sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.
4. obtains all data or results by ethical means and reports them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
5. treats all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitates academic dishonesty by others nor obstructs their academic progress.

b. Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Plagiarism which means the use of material, ideas, figures, code or data as one's own, without appropriately acknowledging the original source. This may involve submission of material, verbatim or paraphrased, that is authored by another person or published earlier by oneself.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- (a) Reproducing, in whole or part, text/sentences from a report, book, thesis, publication or the internet.
- (b) Reproducing one's own previously published data, illustrations, figures, images, or someone else's data, etc.

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- (c) Taking material from class-notes or incorporating material from the internet graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources into one's class reports, presentations, manuscripts, research papers or thesis without proper attribution.
- (d) Self-plagiarism which constitutes copying verbatim from one's own earlier published work in a journal or conference proceedings without appropriate citations.
- e) Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement. Paraphrasing or changing an author's words or style without citation.

(ii) Cheating

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Copying during examinations, and copying of homework assignments, term papers, theses or manuscripts.
- (b) Allowing or facilitating copying, -or writing a report or taking examination for someone else.
- (c) Using unauthorized material, copying, collaborating when not authorized by the University.
- (d) Fabricating (making up) or falsifying (manipulating) data and reporting them in thesis and publications.
- (e) Creating sources, or citations that do not exist
- (f) Altering previously evaluated and re-submitting the work for re-evaluation
- (g) Signing another student's name on an assignment, report, research paper, dissertation, thesis or attendance sheet

- (iii) Conflict of Interest: A clash of personal or private interests with professional activities can lead to a potential conflict of interest, in diverse activities such as teaching, research, publication, working on committees, research funding and consultancy. It is necessary to protect actual professional independence, objectivity and commitment, and also to avoid an appearance of any impropriety arising from conflicts of interest.

Conflict of interest is not restricted to personal financial gain; it extends to a large gamut of professional academic activities including peer reviewing, serving on various committees, which may, for example, oversee funding or give recognition, as well as influencing public policy.

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To promote transparency and enhance credibility, potential conflicts of interests must be disclosed in writing to appropriate authorities, so that a considered decision can be made on a case-by-case basis. Some additional information is available also in the section below dealing with resources.

7.1 Guidelines for academic conduct are provided below to guard against negligence as well as deliberate dishonesty: Use proper methodology for experiments and computational work. Accurately describe and compile data.

- (a) Carefully record and save primary and secondary data such as original pictures, instrument data readouts, laboratory notebooks, and computer folders. There should be minimal digital manipulation of images/photos; the original version should be saved for later scrutiny, if required, and the changes made should be clearly described.
- (b) Ensure robust reproducibility and statistical analysis of experiments and simulations. It is important to be truthful about the data and not to omit some data points to make an impressive figure (commonly known as “cherry picking”).
- (c) Write clearly in your own words. It is necessary to resist the temptation to “copy and paste” from the Internet or other sources for class assignments, manuscripts and thesis, or reproduce AI-generated material.
- (d) Give due credit to previous reports, methods, computer programs, etc. with appropriate citations. Material taken from your own published work should also be cited; as mentioned above, it will be considered self-plagiarism otherwise.

7.2 Individual and Collective Responsibility: The responsibility varies with the role one plays.

- a) **Student roles:** Before submitting a dissertation, thesis (MSc/MA or PhD) to the department, the student is responsible for checking the dissertation/thesis for plagiarism using software that is available on the web, or as specified by the University, as per existing UGC regulations. In addition, the student should undertake that he/she is aware of the academic guidelines of the University, has checked the document for plagiarism, and that the dissertation/thesis is original work. A web-check does not necessarily rule out plagiarism. If a student observes or becomes aware of any violations of the academic integrity policy he/she is strongly encouraged to report the misconduct in a timely manner.
- b) **Faculty roles:** Faculty members should ensure that proper methods are followed for experiments, computations and theoretical developments, and that data are properly recorded and saved for future reference. In addition, they should review manuscripts, dissertations and theses carefully. Faculty

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members are also responsible for ensuring personal compliance with the above broad issues relating to academic integrity. Faculty members are expected to inform students of the University's academic integrity policy within their specific courses, to ensure minimal academic dishonesty, and to respond appropriately and timely to violations of academic integrity.

- c) **Institutional roles:** A breach of academic integrity is a serious offence with long lasting consequences for both the individual and the University, and this can lead to various sanctions. In the case of a student the first violation of academic breach will lead to a warning followed by appropriate disciplinary action. A repeat offence, if deemed sufficiently serious, could lead to expulsion, subject to the Vice Chancellor's decision, which is final and binding. It is recommended that faculty bring any academic violation to the notice of the HoD. Upon receipt of reports of scientific misconduct, the Vice Chancellor may appoint a committee to investigate the matter and suggest appropriate measures on a case by case basis.

8. ANTI-RAGGING

The University has a stringent and an effective anti-ragging policy in place which is based on the 'UGC Regulation *on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009* [hereinafter referred to as the 'UGC Regulations']'. The UGC Regulations have been framed in view of the directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India to prevent and prohibit ragging in all Indian Educational Institutions and Colleges. The said UGC Regulations shall apply mutatis mutandis to the University and the students are requested kindly to note that

a. Ragging constitutes one or more of the following acts:

- I. any conduct by any student or students whether by words spoken or written or by an act which amounts to teasing, treating or handling with rudeness any student;
- II. indulging in rowdy or undisciplined activities by any student or students which causes or is likely to cause annoyance, hardship, physical or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in any other student; asking any student to do any act which such student will not in the ordinary course do and which is tantamount to causing or generating a sense of shame, or torment or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the physique or psyche of such a student;
- III. any act by a senior student that prevents, disrupts or disturbs the regular academic activity of any student;
- IV. exploiting the services of a student for completing the academic tasks assigned to an individual or a group of students;

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- V. any act of financial extortion or forceful expenditure burden put on a student by other students;
- VI. any act of physical abuse including all variants of it: sexual abuse, stripping, forcing obscene and lewd acts, gestures, causing bodily harm or any other danger to health or person, of the body or the mind;
- VII. any act or abuse by spoken words, emails, post, public insults which would also include deriving perverted pleasure, vicarious or sadistic thrill from actively or passively participating in the discomfiture to any other student ;
- VIII. any act that affects the mental health and self-confidence of any other student with or without an intent to derive a sadistic pleasure or showing off power, authority or superiority by a student over any other student.

b. ANTI-RAGGING COMMITTEE:

The Anti-Ragging Committee, as constituted by the Vice Chancellor and chaired by the Registrar, in compliance with UGC Regulations, shall examine all complaints of anti-ragging and make recommendations based on the nature of the incident, subject to the University Rules (email id: antiragging@cottonuniversity.ac.in)

c. ANTI-RAGGING SQUAD

To render assistance to students, an Anti-Ragging Squad, which is a smaller body, has also been constituted consisting of various members of the campus community. The said Squad shall keep a vigil on ragging incidents taking place in the community and undertake patrolling functions. Students may note that the Squad is active and alert at all times and empowered to inspect places of potential ragging, and also make surprise raids in hostels and other hotspots in the University. The Squad can also investigate incidents of ragging and make recommendations to the Anti-Ragging Committee and shall work under the guidance of the Anti-Ragging Committee.

A student found guilty by the committee will attract one or more of the following punishments, as imposed by the Anti-Ragging Committee:

- a) Suspension from attending classes and academic privileges.
- b) Withholding/ withdrawing scholarship/ fellowship and other benefits.
- c) Debarring from appearing in any test/ examination or other evaluation process.
- d) Withholding results.
- e) Debarring from undertaking any collaborative work or attending national or international conferences/symposia/meeting to present his/her research work.

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- f) Suspension/ expulsion from the hostels and mess.
- g) Cancellation of admission.
- h) Expulsion from the institution and consequent debarring from admission to any other institution for a specified period.
- i) In cases where the persons committing or abetting the act of ragging are not identified, the institute shall resort to collective punishment.
- j) If need be, in view of the intensity of the act of ragging committed, a First Information Report (FIR) shall be filed by the Registrar, on the recommendation of the Anti-Ragging Committee, at the local police authorities.

The Anti-Ragging Committee of the University shall take appropriate decision, including imposition of punishment, depending on the facts and circumstances of each incident of ragging and nature and gravity of the incident of ragging.

- d. Notwithstanding anything contained above, Vice-Chancellor's decision on all of these shall be final and binding.

9. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The University's Gender Policy compliant with Rules for prevention and prohibition of sexual harassment of women at workplace, dated 20 February 2023 in concurrence with the Govt of India's Gazette notification of the POSH Act (2013) shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the students of the University and can be accessed by students (<https://cottonuniversity.ac.in/storage/uploads/pdf/568e747f90851e23e576f548c4751ed8.pdf>) Students should note that sexual misconduct or harassment encompasses a range of conduct, including but not limited to sexual assault, unwanted touching or persistent unwelcome comments, e-mails, or pictures of an insulting or degrading sexual nature, which may constitute harassment, which shall depend on the circumstances of each case.

10. STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- a) The University has a stringent and an effective Grievance Redressal procedure in place which is based on the 'UGC Regulation 2023 (CG-F.1-13/2022 (CPP-II), dated: 11/04/2023).'
- b) Any student aggrieved by any acts (considered to be deemed by the Grievance Redressal Cell) can approach the Students' Grievance and Redressal Cell at the University.
- c) The Grievance Redressal Cell shall consist of members as appointed by the Vice Chancellor. The said grievance must be in writing or as received from the online portal of the University. It should be made within 60 days from the day of the alleged incident. The Cell shall take cognizance of the grievance and inform the Committee formed to enforce this Code or to the Internal Complaints Committee (IC), in case of any sexual harassment complaints, as provided for under the Govt of India's Gazette Notification on Prohibition and Prevention of

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Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace, (POSH) Act 2013 and adopted by the University.

d) An aggrieved student may appear either in person or authorize a representative to present the case to the Grievance Redressal Cell for enquiry and action, thereof.

11. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE

As students are members of the University campus, they have a substantial interest in its governance. The Code, policies and the varied procedures laid down herein intends that the principle of student involvement in governance in both administrative and academic areas is essential and it is pivotal that students must be, at all junctures, encouraged to put forth their views and advice, for informed decision making. Student participation is encouraged and must be strengthened through the involvement of students at all levels. Therefore, all students who are a part of the University and those who are prospective students, are advised to uphold the policy and inform the University of any violations and assist individually and collectively to improve the quality and effectiveness of this Code and appended policies.

REFERENCES –

<http://deanofstudents.uesc.edu/student-conduct/student-handbook/pdf/120.0-policy-student-participation-governance.pdf>

Student Grievance Redressal Cell, Cotton University

email id: grievanceredressal@cottonuniversity.ac.in

Internal Complaints Committee (IC), Cotton University

email id: internalcommittee@cottonuniversity.ac.in

Anti Ragging Committee, Cotton University

email id: antiragging@cottonuniversity.ac.in

https://upload.indiacode.nic.in/showfile?actid=AC_CEN_13_14_00009_201314_1517807327_213&type=rule&filename=-----Rules,2013%2009%20Dec%202013.pdf

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