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# Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Ethics Committee

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*Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will  
be found out – Proverbs of King Solomon, the wise!*



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**Document History, Revision & Version Control**

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date of Release</b>	<b>Passed and Approved by</b>	<b>Description of Changes</b>
1.0	1-March-24	First Ethics Committee	Baseline version created by: Ajoy Shah, Manohar Garikapati, Prabodh Gupta, Deepali Jain, Ritu Kochar Mishra

## Preface

Ethics involves more than following prescribed laws. Ethical dilemmas are sprinkled all over workplaces, and it is critical to interpret how organisations define application of ethics to professional situations. Hence, laying a solid ethical foundation is necessary; which, in this context is being laid on:

- Compliance to the law of the land,
- ISTD's published code of conduct,
- And, any other published works, viz., MOA, Minutes of AGM, Chapter guidelines, and other official documents

These be the tenets of our ethics to be upheld in the ISTD Delhi Chapter. This document, put out by the first Ethics Committee ISTD Delhi Chapter and published in February 2024, will detail any process of inquiry for cases/ complaints to learn and establish, 'what is good, right versus wrong, and acceptable' or unacceptable, as such.

ISTD is an organisation of national representation in the global forum of the learning profession and the human development domain. Our commitment to ethical conduct needs to be woven into the fabric of our ways of working, interactions with stakeholders, our resources utilization and decision-making. The formation of the Ethics Committee serves as a cornerstone of this commitment to foster this consciousness.

As part of a learning organisation holding membership of exemplary learned professionals and practitioners of the discipline, the ethics committee will establish a mature practice. The essence of this committee is to uphold and facilitate fundamental ethical behaviours, and enhance trust within the organization in order to build spirit of unity and cooperation among members within the Delhi Chapter of ISTD. Given that ISTD is a membership-based society, the committee will, as a core principle strive toward restorative justice to ensure unity over division among members, rebuilding relationships and allow for spirit of brotherhood to always prevail.

By establishing an Ethics Committee, ISTD Delhi Chapter underlines its unwavering commitment to ethical conduct. This committee will be instrumental in guiding our actions meaningfully going forward. Therefore, the committee will strive to reduce conflicts and negative work-dynamics in order to protect the reputation and goodwill of the society; minimise exposure to legal consequences due to various actions; and provide a proper mechanism for reporting grievances.

## **I. Introduction**

### **Formation of The Ethics Committee of Indian Society for Training and Development (ISTD), Delhi Chapter**

The General Body of ISTD Delhi Chapter in its Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EOGM) held on 5th November 2023, deliberated, inter alia, on the following Agenda point 4, where the members agreed that Delhi Chapter should have an Ethics/Disciplinary/POSH Committee and matters/ complaints pertaining to ethics, discipline and sexual harassment should be referred to such committee for investigation and recommendation. It was resolved to constitute a committee in this regard.

Upon formation, and subsequent committee meetings under the committee chair, the core areas of oversight for current term were determined as below.

#### **Objectives and Scope:**

Specific objective of this committee is to provide immediate and timely redressal mechanisms to address issues enlisted below, raised within ISTD Delhi Chapter related to the members of the chapter.

Any matters other than POSH, as listed below:

#### **1. Compliance with ISTD mission and values:**

- Ensure all activities align with ISTD stated mission, core values and formal procedures.
- Address any existing or potential conflicts between different values or priorities.
- Address any issues conflicting with ISTD code of conduct
- Review policies and procedures to ensure they uphold ethical principles.

#### **2. Financial accountability and transparency:**

- Oversee financial reporting and fundraising practices for accuracy and compliance.
- Address concerns about potential misuse of funds or conflicts of interest.
- Develop and implement policies for transparency in financial matters.

#### **3. Conflicts of interest:**

- Identify and manage potential conflicts of interest among staff, board members, and other stakeholders.
- Investigate and address potential violations of conflict of interest policies.

#### **4. Fundraising practices:**

- Review fundraising activities to ensure they are ethical, legal, and transparent.
- Address concerns about misleading marketing or pressure tactics.
- Develop and implement policies for ethical and responsible fundraising.

#### **5. Human resources practices:**

- Review hiring, compensation, and performance management practices for fairness and equity.
- Address concerns about discrimination, harassment, or other ethical violations.

6. Data privacy and security:

- Oversee the ISTD Delhi chapter's collection, use, and storage of personal data to ensure compliance with privacy laws and ethical principles.
- Address concerns about data breaches or misuse of personal information.

7. Whistle-blower protection:

- Establish and maintain a system for receiving and investigating reports of ethical violations or wrongdoing.
- Protect whistle-blowers from retaliation or discrimination.
- Develop and implement policies for whistle-blower protection.

8. Advocacy and lobbying activities:

- Ensure that advocacy and lobbying activities are conducted in a transparent and ethical manner.
- Address concerns about potential conflicts of interest or undue influence.

10. Relationships with stakeholders:

- Oversee the Chapter, and members' interactions with donors, beneficiaries, partners, and other stakeholders to ensure they are conducted ethically and respectfully.
- Address concerns about potential exploitation or harm to stakeholders.

As the committee matures and stabilizes, the below may be taken up as additional scope under their oversight:

- Develop a comprehensive code of conduct for office bearers, various committee members, and chapter members of Delhi Chapter, encompassing below, but not limited to:
- Develop and enforce policies for disclosing and managing conflicts of interest.
- Develop and implement policies for ethical and respectful human resources practices.
- Develop and implement policies for ethical advocacy and lobbying.
- Develop and implement policies for ethical stakeholder engagement.
- Develop and implement policies for data privacy and security.

## II. Roles and Responsibilities

Appointment of the First ISTD Delhi Ethics Committee

W.e.f. 27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023 ISTD DELHI CHAPTER ETHICS COMMITTEE was appointed based on Selection Criteria decided in 8th MC Meeting (<https://www.istddelhi.in/pastactivity>).

Appointees in the First ISTD Delhi Ethics Committee, include:

Ms/ AJOY SHAH, MANOHAR GARIKAPATI, PRABODH GUPTA, DEEPALI JAIN, RITU KOCHAR MISHRA

As a member of the Ethics Committee, responsibilities will include:

- Participating in regular committee meetings to discuss and address ethical considerations within the society.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on ethical concerns brought to the committee's attention.
- Collaborating with fellow committee members to develop and create ethical guidelines and policies.
- Maintaining confidentiality and discretion when dealing with sensitive ethical matters.
- Offering guidance and recommendations to the society's leadership on ethical best practices.

All members, have subsequently confirmed their acceptance and commitment toward their roles and responsibilities.

Additional responsibilities of all committee members,

- Disclose any other role or affiliations that might potentially result in a conflict, or, interest.
- Conduct timely and regular meetings, and minute the key decisions, and proceedings of the same.
- Conduct fair and impartial investigations. Uphold procedural justice ensuring the aggrieved party and respondent have equal opportunity to present their cases and respond to allegations.
- Prepare a comprehensive report by documenting the findings of the investigation, including evidence, analysis, and recommendations for disciplinary action or resolution.
- Communicate effectively by keeping involved parties informed about the progress of the investigation and the final decision in a clear and timely manner.
- Maintain professional conduct, integrity, and respect for all parties throughout the process.
- Promote ethical awareness by engaging in activities that educate and empower individuals within the chapter to act ethically.

### III. Complaint/ Grievance Filing Procedure

The Ethics Committee, ISTD Delhi encourages members to take cognizance and raise necessary issues as possible for a healthy and utmost ethical functioning of the Chapter.

All complaints and issues need to be raised formally and sent in legibly written format or typed, and sent by Speed Post to Delhi Chapter Office at the following address: Chairman, Ethics Committee, ISTD Delhi Chapter, B-23, Qutab Institutional Area, Delhi 110016; or email to: [ethicsistddelhi@gmail.com](mailto:ethicsistddelhi@gmail.com)

As a complainant (complainer), you are responsible for:

1. Providing accurate and complete information. Anonymous complaints will not be taken up for consideration by committee.
2. You must provide all relevant details about their complaint, complainee(s), including dates, witnesses, and any supporting evidence in order to ensure a thorough investigation and facilitate a fair resolution.
3. Cooperating with the investigation by responding to requests for information and participate in the investigation process as needed. Requests may include attending interviews over call, or in person; providing additional documentation, or clarifying certain details.
4. Maintaining respectful communication with all parties involved in the process respectfully and professionally, even if they disagree with the outcome. Using abusive language or threatening behaviour can hinder the process and delay resolution.
5. Understand that thoroughness takes time can help manage expectations and avoid unnecessary frustration. Be patient with the process as grievance investigations can take time.
6. Accept the final decision. Even if they disagree, it is crucial for moving forward. Understand that grievance redressal mechanisms have limitations and may not always achieve complainants' desired outcome.
7. Other areas to be mindful of,
  - Submitting complaints at the earliest possible, and not from a distant timeframe
  - Once a complaint is submitted, refrain from talking about it with others (person(s) or forums)
  - Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of others involved in the process.
  - Adhering to agreed-upon communication channels and procedures.
8. In the spirit of promoting brotherhood and spirit of peaceful fraternity, any legal representations will not be covered under the scope of Ethics Committee, and may be taken up with the MC, or specific individual as such.
9. Avoid frivolous complaints

By fulfilling these responsibilities, complainants can contribute to a smooth and effective grievance redressal process, leading to quicker and more satisfactory resolutions for everyone involved.

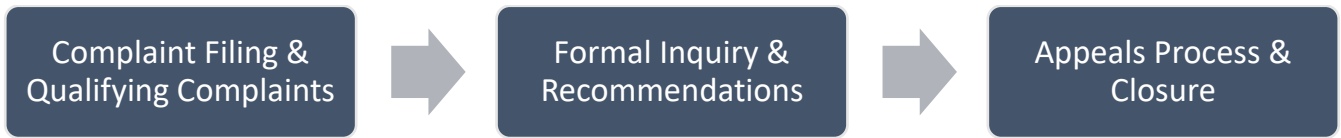
All complainants are assured of,

1. A safe and comfortable environment to share your concerns. Listen actively to their perspective and acknowledge their concerns. Respect, dignity and courtesy will be maintained throughout the process.
2. Confidentiality: Your identity and any sensitive information will be kept confidential by the Ethics committee throughout the process, unless explicit agreement has been obtained otherwise. Such agreement will be sought only if in rare circumstances on need basis.
3. Fair and impartial investigation of your complaints - thoroughly and objectively, without bias towards any party.
4. A realistic timeframe for resolving complaints and stick to it as much as possible. Regular updates about the progress of your complaints.
5. Clear explanations of procedures followed, and decisions made.

Through execution of responsibilities bestowed on each parties, we build mutual trust to actively participate in the redressal process, and lead to fair and effective resolutions for everyone.



### IV. Grievance Redressal Process



<p><b>Start of process</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Complaint lodged:</b> Members submit a written complaint with details of grievance and potential violation.</li> <li>2. <b>Acknowledgement:</b> Ethics committee acknowledges receipt within 7 days of receipt.</li> <li>3. <b>Qualifying /Preliminary investigation:</b> Ethics committee conducts initial inquiry to assess validity and seriousness.</li> <li>4. <b>Decision: 7-Days</b></li> <li>4.1 <b>Formal inquiry:</b> If serious or unresolved, proceed with formal inquiry.</li> <li>4.2 <b>Informal resolution:</b> If minor issue, attempt informal resolution through mediation or direct discussion.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>Issue of letter</b> Complainee/ Defendant receives a call, and a formal letter outlining allegations and to respond within 15-days.</li> <li>6. <b>Inquiry proceedings:</b> Upon receipt of a written response to the formal notice complaint, including evidence and defense. Case Enquiry Officers from the committee gather evidence, interview witnesses, and review documents.</li> <li>7. <b>Inquiry report:</b> Case Enquiry Officer(s) submit their report with findings and recommendations post discussion with Ethics committee chair</li> <li>8. <b>Disciplinary action:</b> Chapter Management reviews the report and decides on disciplinary action (warning, suspension, termination, etc.).</li> <li>9. <b>Decision Communication:</b> Complainant and Complainee are informed of the decision and its rationale.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. <b>Appeal:</b> Complainant or Complainee can appeal the decision within 15 days of communication of decision.</li> <li>11. <b>Review:</b> Appeals Committee (Ethics Committee Chair with the Chapter Chair or a delegated MC member) reviews the appeal and decision.</li> <li>12. <b>Final decision:</b> Post-appeal review the Chapter Chair issues a final and binding decision.</li> </ol> <p><b>End of (Front-end) Redressal Process</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. <b>Reporting of Cases:</b> The committee shall inform the Chapter MC about number of cases open / registered with them. No other details shall be shared unless cases are formally investigated and decisions recommended.</li> <li>14. <b>Closure &amp; Record-Keeping:</b> Ethics committee members, and the respective Case Enquiry Officers need to ensure Records are documented and stored securely.</li> <li>15. <b>CAPA:</b> As per final decisions and recommendations, Ethics committee will implement corrective actions or preventive measures (CAPA).</li> </ol>
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End of year reports will be presented, and published during the AGMs of the chapter by the council chair, or member as available

## V. Appendix:

### 1 Appointment note of the first Ethics Committee, ISTD Delhi (attachment available)



**INDIAN SOCIETY FOR TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT  
(DELHI CHAPTER)**

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3-1-2024

Dear M/s **AJOY SHAH, MANOHAR GARIKAPATI, PRABODH GUPTA,  
DEEPALI JAIN, RITU KOCHAR MISHRA**  
Life Members - ISTD Delhi Chapter

**Notice of Appointment of Ethics Committee**

The General Body of ISTD Delhi Chapter in its Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EOGM) held on 5th November 2023, deliberated, inter alia, on the following Agenda point 4, where the members agreed that Delhi Chapter should have an Ethics/Disciplinary/POSH Committee and matters/complaints pertaining to ethics, discipline and sexual harassment should be referred to such committee for investigation and recommendation. It was resolved to constitute a committee in this regard.

We're happy to announce ISTD DELHI CHAPTER ETHICS COMMITTEE based on Selection Criteria decided in 8th MC Meeting (<https://www.istddelhi.in/pastactivity>).

Your commitment to ethical standards and dedication to upholding the values of our organization have not gone unnoticed, and we believe that your expertise will contribute significantly to the committee's mission. Your appointment is effective from 27th DEC 2023. As a member of the Ethics Committee, your responsibilities will include:

- Participating in regular committee meetings to discuss and address ethical considerations within the society.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on ethical concerns brought to the committee's attention.
- Collaborating with fellow committee members to develop and create ethical guidelines and policies.
- Maintaining confidentiality and discretion when dealing with sensitive ethical matters.
- Offering guidance and recommendations to the society's leadership on ethical best practices.

We are confident that your wealth of experience and commitment to integrity will greatly

[www.istddelhi.in](http://www.istddelhi.in)

### 2 Standard Email Template to acknowledge complaints (WIP)

Dear << Sender >>,

Thank you for your email. Your email has been received in the inbox of 'Ethics Committee, ISTD Delhi Chapter'.

One of the committee members will review the contents, and respond to you with request for more information or share next steps to address the same. You can expect a response in the next 7 to 10 days.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to provide additional information on the same email address with your complete contact details including mobile number, and membership number.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,  
Ethics Committee, ISTD Delhi Chapter