

Freshers' interaction @ NIFT Shillong: Do's and Don'ts

Dear Freshers:

We welcome you once again to the NIFT fraternity. Many of you may have apprehensions about hostel life, particularly about your "interactions" with the seniors in the first few weeks. For your benefit we would like to highlight the fresher-senior interaction at NIFT Shillong.

While it is desirable that freshers and seniors should get to know each other, this must happen in a mutually friendly manner. Any interaction between freshers and seniors where the seniors are friendly, welcoming and non-aggressive is encouraged. Seniors may solicit participation in clubs and other activities by announcing promotional events at well designated times and places. However, no fresher should be forced to attend. **Participation by freshers can only be voluntary.**

On the other hand, **if a fresher is forced to do anything which results in his/her mental discomfort, it should be interpreted as ragging** which is banned by a ruling of the Supreme Court of India. Please be firm and say "no" to any aggressive behaviour without any fear or hesitation. In particular, ragging may take the following forms:

- **Physical abuse**, for example, forcing to eat, drink or smoke, forcing to dress or undress.
- **Verbal abuse**, for example swear words and phrases, direct or indirect derogatory references to the person's appearance, attire, religion, caste, family or chosen field of study.
- **Forced activity**, for example
 - Chores for seniors e.g. copying notes, cleaning rooms etc.
 - Attending extra-curricular events to cheer hostel teams.
 - Missing classes. Not being allowed to study.
 - Staying awake late or getting up at unreasonable times.
 - Singing or dancing or performing in any other way.
 - Using foul language or shouting or cheering loudly.
 - Misbehaving with strangers, particularly women.
 - Reading or browsing pornographic/objectionable material.
- **Lifestyle restrictions**, for example
 - Not allowing certain kinds of clothing or accessories e.g. jeans, belts etc.
 - Enforcing rules regarding shaving or oiling hair. Forcing certain kinds of dress.
 - Restricting access to parts of the hostel e.g. common room.
 - Requiring certain modes of address i.e. seniors should be called Sir or Ma'am.
 - Requiring a particular waking time.

- **Conversational mind-games.** Particular forms of interaction in which a senior or set of seniors manipulates the conversation so as to humiliate the first year student or make him/her feel stupid or insecure or generally threatened.
 - Visiting freshers' rooms during the interaction period, or inviting freshers to their rooms.
 - Forcing freshers to sing, dance or perform in any way under the guise of "talent search" or "interaction".
 - Being overenthusiastic about making freshers participate in any activities.

Freshers are advised to avoid:

- Any "interaction" outside public areas, and beyond college hours; and any interaction which is not on mutually agreeable and equal terms.
- Visiting seniors' rooms during the interaction period, or inviting seniors to your rooms.

There is absolutely no reason for you to put up with any form of aggressive interaction. Please contact SDAC and center coordinators (whose mobile numbers are given in the "Important Numbers" list) to report any ragging. You may also contact the security control room which is manned 24 × 7. If you want to leave an anonymous note about ragging that you have witnessed or experienced, please do so at the drop-boxes available at administration area. You may also inform any of your mentor or any other faculty member. It will help us to curb aggressive interaction more effectively if you are not hesitant to provide details.

We are also seeking volunteers among the freshers to join a student team to sensitize the student community against ragging. Please contact SDAC if you are interested.

The Supreme Court of India has observed that **enrolment in academic pursuits or a campus life should not immunize any adult citizen from the penal provisions of the laws of the land.** According to the directions of the Supreme Court if any instance of ragging is brought to the notice of the administration or the faculty, it is legally binding on us to report the matter to the Shillong Police.

Please contact the SDAC and center coordinators (contact information at NIFT Shillong website) to report any ragging. If you want to leave an anonymous note about ragging that you have witnessed or experienced, please do so at the drop-boxes available in the administration area.