



SNDT Women's University

Disability Policy

(This policy has been approved by the Management Council)

I. Preamble

Government of India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which emphasizes inclusive education as and indicates that as “a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences” (United Nations, 2016). The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD) of 2016, in chapter III emphasizes that it is the duty of the educational institutions to promote and facilitate inclusive education and adult education. Similarly, the National Education Policy (2020) envisions the role of education in creating equitable opportunities to achieve economic and social change all socially and economically disadvantaged groups including those with disability. Accordingly, the higher education institutions are required to adopt measures to make the admission process and curriculum inclusive as well as develop technology tools for increased participation and better learning outcomes. Ensuring accessibility and creation of disable-friendly environment is required. In this regard, the University Grants Commission (2022) has issued guidelines for Accessibility in Higher Education Institutions.

II. Definitions (Key Terms)

i) A student with benchmark disability – A student with benchmark disability is a person with not less than forty percent of a specified disability, as certified by the certifying authority. Twenty-one types of disabilities as have been covered under the RPWD Act. These are

1. Blindness

2. Low- vision
3. Leprosy Cured persons
4. Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing)
5. Locomotor Disability
6. Dwarfism
7. Intellectual Disability
8. Mental Illness
9. Autism Spectrum Disorder
10. Cerebral Palsy
11. Muscular Dystrophy
12. Chronic Neurological conditions
13. Specific Learning Disabilities
14. Multiple Sclerosis
15. Speech and Language disability
16. Thalassemia
17. Hemophilia
18. Sickle Cell disease
19. Multiple Disabilities including deafblindness
20. Acid Attack victim
21. Parkinson's disease

ii) Student with special needs- A student with special needs is a person without a benchmark disability however has a special need that requires to be met e.g., a person with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or mild hearing impairment.

iii) Reasonable accommodations- Reasonable accommodations refer to the modifications made in the curriculum transaction (e.g., learning objectives, teaching-learning methods, teaching -learning material, evaluation, etc.) without compromising the essence of the course requirements.

3. Scope

The disability policy is applicable for the students of post graduate departments of SNT Women's University who have a benchmark disability and special needs and can benefit from reasonable accommodations made by the university to improve physical and curriculum accessibility from them.

4. Need of The Policy

SNDT Women's University is the first university in India for women learners. It is known for the efforts it has taken for empowerment of women, which is a marginalized section of society. Creating accessible educational opportunities for women students with disability in the university and empowering them will be taking the motto of the university "Sanskrita Stree Parashakti" forward. The various edicts of the acts, policies and guidelines guide the various processes of the university viz. admission, curricular transactions, examination, etc. that will ensure the inclusion of students with benchmark disabilities and special needs.

5. Objectives of the Policy

The Policy document serves to provide a list of guidelines to be followed in the university to encourage the development and strengthening of an inclusive learning environment for learners with disability and special needs.

6. Policy: Guidelines for implementation of the policy

SNDT Women's University will

1. Create a physically accessible and thus barrier free infrastructure in lines with the guidelines of Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan
2. Ensure that the Maharashtra state government reservation policy for persons with benchmark disability is implemented for admissions to various programmes in the university; providing exemptions and concessions for choice of courses and examinations as per guidelines of Directorate of Higher Education respectively.
3. Ensure that the Equal Opportunities Cell is a driving force for the provision of equitable opportunities for students with benchmark disabilities. Equal Opportunities Cell should proactively work on reducing infrastructural barriers that hamper physical access to persons with disabilities, create awareness about various disabilities amongst the various stakeholders of the university, and create mechanisms to train the stakeholders to develop acceptance of students with benchmark disabilities. It should be at the forefront to support curriculum accessibility for students with benchmark with disability.
4. Use multiple means of providing input and multiple ways of engaging the students that is in line with universal design for learning principles

5. Create accessible library resources by incorporating alternate and accessible formats. Students with benchmark disabilities should
 - Have reservation in schemes like book banks
 - Be allowed buddy transactions for book lending (authorize classmate to sign on behalf of student with benchmark disability of while borrowing library books)
 - Be able to access to library spaces and library technology
 - Be allowed extra days for book lending
 - Have reserved reading spaces
6. Ensure that the equipment, material, devices required and used by students with benchmark disabilities are procured and maintained regularly
7. Provide guidance and counselling services for students with benchmark disabilities to cater to their emotional needs
8. Ensure provisions for Concessions in Examinations for students with benchmark disabilities
 - The facility of Scribe/Reader/Lab Assistant should be provided to any student with benchmark disability and has limitations in writing (e.g., blindness, locomotor disability, cerebral palsy, specific learning disability etc.)
 - Students with benchmark disabilities should be given as far as possible, the option for choosing the mode (braille, question paper in large font, computer to record answers etc.) for taking an examination
 - Compensatory time (i.e., extra/additional time) should not be less than 20 minutes per hour of examination for the candidates who are allowed to use Scribe/Reader/Lab Assistant
 - Candidates should be allowed to use assistive devices like talking calculators in examination (in a case where calculators are allowed), tailor frame, Braille slate, abacus, geometry kit, Braille measuring tape and AAC devices like communication chart and electronic devices
 - Proper sitting arrangements (preferable on the ground floor) should be made before the commencement of the examination. Examination center also should be accessible to persons with disabilities.
 - The Board of Examinations and Evaluation should provide question papers in Braille or e-text or on a computer having suitable screen reading software for open book examination. Online examination should be in accessible format i.e., websites,

question papers and all other study materials should be accessible as per the international standards laid down in this regard

- Alternate objective questions in lieu of descriptive questions should be provided for candidates with hearing disabilities in addition to the existing policy of giving alternate questions in lieu of questions requiring visual inputs for candidates with visual disabilities

9. Develop an accessible university website according to prescribed international standards

UGC Guidelines pertaining to disability that policy:

https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/8572354_Final-Accessibility-Guidelines.pdf
