



GOA UNIVERSITY
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY FOR PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES

1. INTRODUCTION

Goa University is committed to disseminating higher education equally to all sectors of society. While doing this, Goa University casts special attention to the persons with disabilities to provide equal opportunity in availing themselves of the resources of the University. To enable this, Goa University has framed an **Equal Opportunity Policy** in the light of “**The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**” adopted by the Government of India.

This policy is based on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 along with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017, and in accordance with guidelines issued by UGC in August 2023, together, the “Disability Law” has been endorsed by the Indian Government. The new Disability Law gives effect to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Disability Law inter alia seeks to protect persons with disabilities from various forms of discrimination, increase measures for effective participation and inclusion in society, and ensure equality of opportunity and adequate accessibility.

Goa University has already implemented significant provisions under the Act and plans to take care of the remaining aspects so that the requirements are fulfilled at the earliest possible time. The Equal Opportunity Policy has been framed in conformity with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, to the extent viable under the present infrastructure of Goa University.

2. PURPOSE

The Equal Opportunity Policy of Goa University is to provide equal opportunities to the differently abled students and employees of the University without any discrimination, on the grounds of age, colour, marital status, physical ability, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or any other relevant for the purpose.

Based on the above considerations, Goa University shall strive to maintain a working environment that is free from any harassment. This Equal Opportunity Policy is subject to applicable regulations, qualifications, and merit of the individuals concerned. This Policy shall be consistently applicable throughout the academic period of studentship for students and from the date of recruitment until superannuation for employees.

3. DEFINITION

The definitions of different terms used in this Policy will be as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016; Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017; Guidelines prescribed in O.M. of the Department of Empowerment, Government of India, University Grant Commission Guidelines issued in August 2023, and such other service-related rules.

4. SCOPE

The Equal Opportunity Policy of Goa University shall cover all persons with disabilities, who come under the administrative control of the Goa University. This would include Teaching and Non-teaching employees (regular, ad hoc, contractual, and temporary) and students (UG, PG, and Research Scholars). The employees and students who acquire a disability during their engagement with the University would also be covered by this Policy.

5. COMMITMENT

As specified in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, Goa University is duty-bound to the following:

5.1 RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

a. Equality & Non-discrimination

- i. Goa University shall always ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to equality, life with dignity and respect for his or her integrity with others.
- ii. The University will ensure that no persons with disabilities shall be discriminated on the grounds of disability unless it is shown that the impugned act or omission is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- iii. The University shall ensure that no person shall be deprived of his or her personal liberty on the grounds of disability.
- iv. The University shall take steps to utilize the capacity of persons with disabilities by providing an appropriate environment, and
- v. The University shall take necessary steps to ensure reasonable accommodation for differently abled persons.

b. Protection from Cruelty and Inhuman Treatment

Goa University shall take necessary measures to protect persons with disabilities from being subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

c. Protection from Abuse, Violence, and Exploitation

Goa University shall take the following measures to protect persons with disabilities against abuse, violence, and exploitation:

- i. Take cognizance of incidents of abuse, violence, and exploitation and provide legal remedies available against such incidents.
- ii. Take steps to avoid such incidents and prescribe the procedure for reporting, and
- iii. Create awareness and make available information among the Goa University Community.

5.2. EDUCATION

a. Duty of Educational Institutions

The Goa University shall endeavor to provide inclusive education to the persons with disabilities and shall:

- i. Admit them without discrimination and provide education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities equally with others
- ii. Make building, campus and various facilities accessible
- iii. Provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements
- iv. Ensure that the education to persons who are blind or deaf or both is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication to the extent possible.
- v. Curriculum may have provision for reduced course load.
- vi. Flexibility in attendance requirements and such other provisions as provided by the University Grants Commission from time to time with respect to persons with disabilities.
- vii. For intellectually disabled persons, admissions may be given as per mental age and not as per the chronological age of the applicant.

b. Specific Measures to Promote and Facilitate Inclusive Education

The Goa University shall take the following measures for the purpose of providing inclusive education to the differently abled students:

- i. Train the staff to support inclusive education at all levels of education.
- ii. Provide books, other learning materials, and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities up to the completion of the degree,
- iii. Make arrangements to obtain scholarships in appropriate cases for students with

- benchmark disability.
- iv. Make suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of differently-abled students such as extra time for completion of examination papers and facility of scribe or amanuensis.
 - v. Establish MoU with the institutions from which an adequate number of resources could be drawn for the support of all levels of education.
 - vi. Promote research to improve learning, and
 - vii. Any other measures, as may be required.

c. Guidelines for Conducting Written Examination for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities

The Goa University shall follow the guidelines prescribed in the office memorandum of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, dated 29th August 2018 and all such guidelines issued from time to time dealing with the provisions of persons with Benchmark Disabilities.

5.3. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

a. Skill Development

Goa University shall Include differently-abled persons in skill development training activities within the domain of Goa University.

b. Non-discrimination in employment

- i. The Goa University shall try to provide reasonable accommodation and an appropriate barrier-free and conducive environment to differently-abled employees.
- ii. No promotion shall be denied to a person merely on the grounds of disability.
- iii. The Goa University shall not dispense with or reduce in rank, an employee who acquires a disability during his or her service, provided that, if an employee after acquiring a disability is not suitable for the post, he/she was holding, shall be shifted to some other post with the same pay scale and service benefits and provided further that if it is not

possible to adjust the employee against any post, he/she may be kept on a supernumerary post until a suitable post is available or he/she attains the age of superannuation, whichever is earlier.

- iv. The University may frame policies for posting and/or transfer of differently abled employees (within the University).
- v. The University shall appoint a Nodal Officer to look after the issues of implementation of reservation for the differently abled persons in employment and maintenance of rosters.

c. Computation of Vacancies

- i. For the purposes of computation of vacancies, the total number of vacancies including vacancies arising in the identified and non-identified posts in the cadre strength in each group of posts shall be taken into account by the appropriate Government for the persons with benchmark disabilities, provided that the reservation in promotion shall be in accordance with the instructions issued by the Government of Goa from time to time.
- ii. The Goa University shall maintain a vacancy-based roster for the purpose of calculation of vacancies for persons with benchmark disabilities in the cadre strength as per the instructions issued by the Government of Goa from time to time.
- iii. While making advertisements to fill up vacancies, Goa University shall indicate the number of vacancies reserved for each class of persons with benchmark disabilities in accordance with the provisions of section 34 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- iv. The reservation for differently-abled persons in accordance with the provisions of section 34 of the Act shall be horizontal and the vacancies for persons with benchmark disabilities shall be maintained as a separate class.
- v. The University shall interchange vacancies in accordance with the provisions of section 34 of the Act, only if due process of recruitment to fill up the vacancies reserved for persons with benchmark disabilities has been complied with.

d. Casual Leave

The differently abled employee may avail of regular twelve (12) days of casual leave. Additional four (4) days are provided which may be availed as Special Casual Leave for specific requirements relating to the disability of the official.

e. Special Casual Leave

Special Casual Leave not more than 10 days in a calendar year may be granted to attend Conferences/Seminars/Training/Workshops related to Disability and Development-related programmes organized at National and State level agencies.

f. Maintenance of Records

- i. The Goa University shall maintain records of the differently abled persons in relation to the matter of employment, facilities provided and other necessary information in compliance with the provisions in such form and manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government and State Government from time to time.
- ii. The records shall contain the following particulars, namely:
 - (a) The number of differently-abled persons who are employed and the date from when they are employed;
 - (b) The name, gender, and address of the differently abled persons;
 - (c) The nature of the disability of such persons;
 - (d) The nature of work being rendered by such employed differently abled person; and
 - (e) The kind of facilities being provided to such differently-abled persons.
- iii. The University shall produce for inspection on demand; records maintained under the rules, to the authorities under the Act and shall supply such information which may be required for the purpose of ascertaining whether the provisions have been complied with.

5.4 GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL OFFICER AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL CELL

Goa University shall establish a Grievance Redressal Cell and appoint a Grievance Redressal Officer as required under Section 23(1) of the RPwD Act, 2016.

(a) Composition and Tenure of the Grievance Redressal Cell

- i. The **Grievance Redressal Officer**, as the Ex-Officio Chairperson.
- ii. Two permanent employees (one male and one female) having adequate legal knowledge or issues associated with persons with disabilities as Members.
- iii. Two employee representatives with disabilities (one male and one female) as Members.
- iv. Two student representatives (one male and one female) as Members.
- v. Two student representatives with disabilities (one male and one female) as Members.
- vi. One External Member from a disability organization who is familiar with issues of discrimination on the basis of disability.
- vii. **Nodal Officer** (for looking after the issues of implementation of reservation in employment and maintenance of rosters) as the Member Secretary.

The Members from the employee side and the external member of the committee would hold the office for a period of three (3) years while the membership of the student representatives would expire on the completion of their respective academic programmes or completion of three (3) years or whichever is earlier.

(b) The Duties and Responsibilities of the Grievance Redressal Officer shall be as follows:

- i. Taking initiative and providing the requisite support to realize the goals of an inclusive and accessible workplace along with accommodation;
- ii. Addressing grievances of persons with benchmark disabilities;
- iii. Maintaining a register of complaints of persons with disabilities in the manner of maintenance of a register of complaints as provided for.
 1. The Grievance Redressal Officer shall maintain a register of complaints of persons with disabilities with the following particulars, namely-
 - (a) Date of Complaint
 - (c) Name of the complainant
 - (d) Name of the person who is enquiring the complaint.
 - (e) Place of incident.
 - (f) The name of establishment of person against whom the complaint is made.

- (g) Gist of the complaint.
- (h) Documentary evidence if any.
- (i) Date of disposal by Grievance Redressal Officer.
- (j) Any Other Information.

2. Complaint shall be inquired within two weeks of its registration. If the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the action taken on his or her complaint, he or she may address his/her grievance to the appropriate appellate authority provided under the RPwD Act, 2016.
- iv. Implementing the action plan and developing proactive strategies to prevent discrimination and harassment;
 - v. Creating awareness and ensuring employees and students are aware of the Equal Opportunity Policy;
 - vi. The Grievance Redressal Officer will share the quarterly report with the Goa University authority.
 - vii. Creating an environment where all employees are encouraged to report any incidents of violation of rights of persons with disabilities to the concerned authority.

5.5 SOCIAL SECURITY, HEALTH, REHABILITATION AND RECREATION

1. Social Security

Social Security will be provided to the differently abled persons as per the rules of Government of Goa, applicable to Goa University.

2. Healthcare

Health care services and facilities will be provided to the differently abled persons as per the rules of the Government of Goa, applicable to Goa University

3. Culture and Recreation

- i. The University in collaboration with the Government authorities shall take measures to promote and protect the rights of all differently-abled persons to have a cultural life and to participate in recreational activities equally with others.
- ii. Facilities, support, and sponsorship shall be rendered to the differently abled persons to pursue their interests and talents.

- iii. The University, within the limit of its economic capacity, would try to promote developing technology, assistive devices, and equipment to facilitate access and inclusion for differently-abled persons in recreational activities.

4. Sporting Activities:

The Goa University within the limit of its economic capacity, shall consider the following steps:

- i. The Goa University will take measures to ensure the effective participation of differently-abled persons in sporting activities.
- ii. The University will accord due recognition to the right of differently-abled persons to participate in sports and will make due provisions for the inclusion of differently-abled persons in their schemes and programmes for the promotion and development of sporting talents.
- iii. Without prejudice to the provisions contained in sub-sections (i) and (ii), the competent authority and the sports authorities shall take measures to:
 - (a) Restructure courses and programmes to ensure access, inclusion and participation of differently-abled persons in all sporting activities;
 - (b) redesign and support infrastructure facilities of all sporting activities for differently-abled persons;
 - (c) develop technology to enhance the potential, talent, capacity, and ability in sporting activities of all differently-abled persons;
 - (d) provide multi-sensory essentials and features in all sporting activities to ensure effective participation of all differently-abled persons;
 - (e) allocate funds for the development of state of art sports facilities for the training of differently-abled persons;
 - (f) promote and organize disability-specific sporting events for differently abled persons and also facilitate awards to the winners and other participants of such sporting events.

5. Digital Infrastructure

Goa University shall follow the Standards for Information and Communication Technology as provided under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017, such as

- i. **Website Standards:** Guidelines for Indian Government Websites, as adopted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India, and implemented by the Government of Goa.
- ii. **Documents Standards:** Electronic Publication (ePUB) or Optical Character Reader (OCR) based pdf formats.

5.6. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR PERSONS WITH BENCHMARK DISABILITIES

1. Reservation in Higher Educational Institutions

- i. Goa University shall reserve seats for persons with benchmark disabilities as notified by the Government of Goa from time to time.
- ii. The persons with benchmark disabilities shall be given an upper age relaxation of five years for admission to higher education.

a. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Awareness Campaigns

- i. Goa University in consultation with the State Commissioner, for Persons with disabilities, shall conduct, encourage, support or promote awareness campaigns and sensitization programmes to ensure that the rights of the differently abled persons provided under this Act are protected.
- ii. The programmes and campaigns specified under sub-section(i) shall also:
 - (a) Promote values of inclusion, tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity;
 - (b) Advance recognition of the skills, merits, and abilities of differently-abled persons and of their contributions to the workforce, labor market, and professional fee;
 - (c) Provide orientation and sensitization at the University and professional training level on the human condition of disability and rights of differently-abled persons;
 - (d) provide orientation and sensitization on disabling conditions and rights of differently-abled persons to employers, administrators, and co-workers
 - (e) Ensure that the rights of differently-abled persons are included in the curriculum

2. Access to Transport

- i. Goa University shall take suitable measures to provide facilities for persons with disabilities to move within the University campus.
- ii. The PwD, who is an employee of Goa University may be provided with transport allowance at double the normal rates as per Circular no. 82-F.No. 7-26(04)/2018-PAT dated 23/07/2018 read with office Memorandum No. 21/03/2017-E.11B dated 12/07/2018 and as adopted by Government of Goa.

3. Access to Information and Communication Technology

Goa University shall take measures to ensure that:

- i. Contents available in audio, print, and electronic media are in an accessible format;
- ii. Differently abled persons have access to electronic media by providing audio description, sign language interpretation, and close captioning;
- iii. Electronic goods and equipment that are meant for everyday use are available in universal design.

4. Mandatory Observance of Accessibility Norms

Goa University shall ensure wherever possible that physical infrastructure including buildings, furniture, facilities, and services in the building/campus are as per the accessibility Standards given in the Harmonized Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-Free Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons, 2016 and the National Building Code, 2016.

5. Social Audit

Goa University shall undertake a social audit of all general schemes and programmes involving persons with disabilities to ensure that the schemes and programmes do not have an adverse impact on the persons with disabilities and meet the requirements and concerns of persons with disabilities.

6. General

The Equal Opportunity Policy will be updated whenever there are amendments in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 or the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017

or any regulations/guidelines pertaining to persons with disabilities enacted by the Government of India and implemented by the Government of Goa.

However, the Act and the Rules pertaining to persons with disabilities shall prevail over any interpretation of this enacted policy.

This Equal Opportunity Policy is approved by the competent authority of Goa University.


21/05/24 -
(Prof. V. S. Nadkarni)
Registrar