



STAREX UNIVERSITY, GURUGRAM

(Established by Haryana Private Universities (Second Amendment) Act No.20 of 2016)
(Recognized by UGC U/sec. 2(f) of the UGC Act, 1956)
(Empowered to Award degrees U/sec. 22 of the UGC Act, 1956)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY



STAREX UNIVERSITY

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CONTENTS

S.No.	Particulars
1	Preamble
2	Objectives
3	Policy Statement
4	Responsibilities
5	Definitions
6	Categories under Equal Opportunity
	6.1. Gender Equity
	6.2. Divyangjan
	6.3. Transgender
	6.4. Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)
7	Approval & Review



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1. **PREAMBLE**

India is a country with lots of diversity and also inequalities. Hence it is important to have proper policies & institutional mechanisms to promote inclusive growth. With this in mind, it is proposed to establish a nodal cell for creative interaction & promotion of equality among all the stakeholders of the society; mainly the students, staff, and faculty of the University. It is an effort to educate, counsel & empower the nation builders to realize their potential & bring them to the mainstream of society; which will enable them to contribute to the workplace, community & the nation at large. The basic aim of the cell is to ensure that persons (students, staff, faculty, and the community) from various diverse backgrounds of community, religion, region, gender or ability are not deprived of their rightful opportunities. They will have access to all the resources, to promote inclusivity and harmony.

Guided by the principles of **justice, equity, and inclusivity**, and in compliance with the **University Grants Commission (UGC) Guidelines, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**, and other applicable statutory provisions, the University affirms its responsibility to create a safe, accessible, and supportive environment for students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders.

Through the establishment of an **Equal Opportunity Cell**, this policy aims to promote diversity, address grievances related to discrimination, and implement measures that remove barriers to participation in all spheres of academic and institutional life.



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This policy seeks to ensure that all individuals irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, disability, or any other status are provided fair and equal access to educational opportunities, employment, and resources.

2. **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this policy is to promote equality, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and ensure that no person is disadvantaged on the basis of:

- a) To promote diversity and inclusive practices among the different stakeholders i.e. students and employees irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender, language, region, age, income, etc.
- b) To raise awareness regarding issues amongst the stakeholders and to create an enabling and non-discriminative environment for the disadvantaged groups in the different Schools of the University so as to provide equal and adequate opportunities to all.
- c) To have a dedicated Committee to foresee the challenges faced by the different disadvantaged groups.
- d) To ensure implementation of policies, schemes and programmes for inclusion of disadvantaged groups within the frameworks of the policies and guidelines of the UGC

3. **POLICY STATEMENT**

Starex University, Gurugram **affirms its commitment to** promoting equity, diversity, and inclusiveness **across all academic and administrative functions. The University shall ensure that** no individual is discriminated



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against or denied access **to education, employment, or any institutional facility on the basis of caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, or any other status.**

Starex University, Gurugram is dedicated to creating and sustaining an environment that respects the dignity of every individual and guarantees **equal treatment and opportunities** for all. In alignment with the **Constitution of India, Guidelines of University Grants Commission (UGC)**, and the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**, the University shall:

- a) Starex University, Gurugram is committed to **promoting diversity, equal opportunities, and eliminating all forms of discrimination or harassment** against staff, students, and stakeholders. Every individual, regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, or social origin, has the right to respect and fair treatment. We believe **mutual respect and fairness** create a diverse and harmonious academic and work environment. Recognizing that diversity enables individuals to reach their full potential, the University takes **proactive steps to build an inclusive and equal-opportunity campus.**
- b) Starex University, Gurugram has zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment. We require all its employees, especially those who hold pedagogic, supervisory or evaluative responsibility, to strictly observe professional conduct at all times and declare a conflict of interest where appropriate. They have to take all necessary steps to ensure



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that any member, employee or student of the University, or any other person who has dealings with the University is not subject to any discrimination or harassment.

- c) Higher Education is available to all sections of society and the University believes it has a duty to ensure that its full range of educational provision is accessible to all members of the community. Applications will be actively encouraged and welcomed from all those seeking to undertake a University course of study.
- d) Starex University, Gurugram is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity within a diverse environment for all its employees, and will ensure that its policies and procedures are equally applied to all staff. Appropriate monitoring of activities is undertaken, ensuring the development of related policies and practices, and the equal and fair treatment of such individuals. The University's Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy will apply to all those seeking employment with the University.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Starex University, Gurugram Administration is responsible for ensuring compliance with UGC guidelines, constitutional provisions, and all anti-discrimination laws, while also allocating adequate resources to implement equal opportunity initiatives and regularly reviewing the policy for effectiveness. The Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) shall develop and monitor programs promoting diversity and inclusion, address grievances related to discrimination or denial of opportunity, maintain proper records, and submit



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annual reports to the competent authorities. Deans and Heads of Departments must ensure that principles of equity and fairness are implemented in their respective units and that students from marginalized groups are encouraged to participate in academic and research activities. Faculty and staff are expected to treat all individuals with dignity and fairness, refrain from any discriminatory or biased behavior, and support institutional initiatives aimed at fostering inclusion. Students are required to respect diversity on campus, avoid any act of discrimination or harassment, and report incidents of unfair treatment to the EOC. All committees and statutory bodies should coordinate with the EOC to organize awareness programs, workshops, and training sessions on inclusion while ensuring fair representation of disadvantaged groups in academic, cultural, and administrative activities. Every stakeholder of the University must uphold the principles of equality, justice, and non-discrimination, cooperate with grievance redressal mechanisms, and contribute to creating and sustaining a safe, inclusive, and supportive campus environment.

5. **DEFINITIONS:**

- a) **“Equal Opportunity”**: Ensuring that every individual is given fair and impartial access to education, employment, resources, and facilities without any discrimination based on caste, creed, religion, gender, disability, socio-economic status, or any other ground.



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- b) **“Discrimination”**: Any act or practice that denies or restricts an individual’s rights, benefits, or opportunities on the basis of characteristics such as caste, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, or economic status.
- c) **“Harassment”**: Any unwelcome conduct verbal, physical, or visual that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for an individual on account of their identity, background, or status.
- d) **“Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)/Divyangjan”**: Individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others, as defined in the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**.
- e) **“Persons with benchmark Disabilities”** means a person with not less than 40% of a specified disability where a specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms and includes persons with disabilities where a specified disability has been defined in measurable terms, as certified by the certifying authority
- f) **“Marginalized Groups”**: Socially or economically disadvantaged sections such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Minorities, Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).



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- g) **“Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC)”**: A statutory body constituted by the University as per UGC guidelines to implement and monitor policies that ensure equity and diversity within the institution.
- h) **“Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)”** are those who, due to historical and ongoing social, economic, educational, vocational, and locational disadvantages, lack equal access to higher education facilities and opportunities.
- i) **“Economically Weaker Section (EWS)”** includes individuals not covered under SC/ST/OBC reservations, with a gross annual income below Rs.8 Lacs in the financial year preceding their application for admission or recruitment.
- j) **“Other Backward Classes (OBC)”** refers to socially and educationally disadvantaged citizens, as identified and listed by the Central or State Governments.
- k) **“Stakeholders”**: All individuals associated with the University, including students, faculty, non-teaching staff, contractual employees, applicants for admission or employment, and visitors.
- l) **“Scheduled Castes”** means the Scheduled Castes, notified under Article 341 of the Constitution of India.
- m) **“Scheduled Tribes”** means the Scheduled Tribes, notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India.



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- n) **“SEDGs Budget”** means the separate budget generated by HEIs from their own sources/CSR/Voluntary/Donations for the welfare and benefit of students belonging to SEDGs.
- o) **“Reasonable Accommodation”**: Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments provided to ensure that persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged individuals can enjoy equal access to opportunities and participation without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden.

6. **CATEGORIES UNDER EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:**

6.1. Gender Equity

Starex University, Gurugram aims to achieve gender equality across its educational, professional, and research operations. This includes addressing biases in attitudes, practices, and structures to ensure equitable access, participation, and advancement for individuals of all genders. The commitment of the University in implementing the gender equality will include the following:

- a) To strive to achieve 50% representation of women in the University’s bodies such as the Senior functionaries of the University, faculty, staff, and students.
- b) Attempt to create an enabling environment considering the specific needs of women faculty and staff such as flexible timing, and transport arrangements during late hours.



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- c) Ensure mandatory attendance of all faculty and staff, and students at gender sensitization workshops.
- d) Ensure that during the induction programme of new faculty and students in the University, sessions on gender sensitization have to be provided.
- e) Display appropriate posters on gender sensitization in different parts of the University.
- f) Gather and use information on how the University's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- g) Consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users, and others) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- h) Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- i) Implement the actions set out in the policy within a year, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
- j) Ensuring equal opportunity for all students, staff, and officers, regardless of gender, to access, participate in, and contribute to all aspects of their learning and working experience at the University, and to receive equitable recognition and rewards for their efforts.



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All stakeholders are tasked with advancing gender equity throughout the learning and working environments. Specifically, staff members are responsible for delivering services and conducting operations with a commitment to eliminating gender inequity and unconscious bias.

6.2. Divyangjan

The 2016 Act on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities prohibits discrimination against people with physical and mental disabilities. The Starex University, Gurugram prohibits discrimination in any form, including that based on a person's disability. The university is committed to cultivating a diverse, harassment-free, and non-discriminatory learning and working environment that promotes equal opportunities for all.

The term "disability" encompasses both motor and sensory limitations (e.g., mobility, vision, or hearing impairments). It also includes disabilities caused by chronic illnesses and syndromes, as well as invisible disabilities like psychological and emotional disorders, learning disabilities, heart disease, asthma, epilepsy, Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI), and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Because many disabilities vary in severity and type of limitation, accommodations must also vary and be tailored to the individual's needs.



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6.3. Transgender

Starex University, Gurugram is committed to upholding the rights and dignity of transgender persons in all academic and administrative domains. In compliance with the UGC guidelines and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, the University shall ensure that no transgender person is discriminated against in admission, employment, or access to any academic, cultural, or administrative facility. Every transgender individual shall have the right to self-identify their gender without any requirement for medical or legal certification, and this identity shall be respected in all official records and processes. The University will provide necessary provisions for gender-neutral facilities such as washrooms and hostels wherever feasible and will allow transgender persons to update their name and gender in academic and institutional documents as per their self-identified gender.

Awareness and sensitization programs on gender diversity and inclusion will be conducted regularly for students, faculty, and staff to create a respectful and inclusive campus environment. Any complaint of discrimination, harassment, or denial of rights against transgender persons shall be addressed promptly by the Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) in coordination with the Internal Complaints Committee or other relevant authorities. The University shall also encourage the active participation of transgender persons in all academic, cultural, and leadership activities and ensure that their rights to equality and full participation are protected at all times.



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6.4. Socio Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)

Accessibility of quality education to all has been a major challenge in countries all over the world. In India, there are several disadvantaged groups, such as women, minorities, SCs and STs, OBCs, PwDs, EWSs, who lag behind others in the field of education. Taking all together in the development of the nation is the prime goal of the Government of India. Accordingly, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the need to address the issues of students belonging to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).

The students belonging to SEDGs face several challenges and difficulties in accessing quality education because of socio-cultural, economic, and historical reasons. The NEP 2020 has indicated people with the following identities as Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) and emphasized on their increased participation, particularly in higher education:

(i) **Gender Identity:**

- ✓ Female (Girls and Women make up about half of all SEDGs and, in particular, those belonging to underrepresented groups have multiple disadvantages)
- ✓ Transgender

(ii) **Social Backwardness Identity:**

- ✓ Scheduled Castes (SCs)
- ✓ Scheduled Tribes (STs)



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- (iii) **Educational and Economic Backward Identity:**
- ✓ Non-Creamy Layer among Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
 - ✓ Economically Weaker Sections (EWSs)
 - ✓ Students from the vernacular medium schools
 - ✓ First Generation Learners
- (iv) **Minority Identity:**
- ✓ Religious Minorities
 - ✓ Linguistic Minorities
- (v) **Person with Disabilities and Benchmark Disabilities:**
- ✓ A person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment
 - ✓ A person with not less than 40% of a specified disability as certified by the certifying authority
- (vi) **Vulnerable and Low Socio-economic conditions:**
- ✓ Migrant communities, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes
 - ✓ Low-income households Below Poverty Line (BPL)
 - ✓ Child beggars and Children in vulnerable situations
 - ✓ Victims of or Children of victims of trafficking
 - ✓ Students who lost their parents
 - ✓ Any other group of low socio-economic conditions.



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(vii) **Less-developed, poor-access, and disadvantaged locations:**

- ✓ Villages and Towns
- ✓ Tribal Areas/Scheduled Areas as mentioned in the V and VI Schedule under the Constitution of India
- ✓ Slums
- ✓ Aspirational Areas with Special Educational Zones (SEZs)
- ✓ North East States
- ✓ Islands
- ✓ Conflict Prone Areas
- ✓ Disaster-prone areas, including flood, drought, earthquake etc.
- ✓ Boarder Areas

Starex University, Gurugram is committed to achieving the goals of NEP 2020 to effectively address the challenges related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the challenges related to achieving SDG-4 (quality education), SDG-5 (gender equality), SDG-1 (no poverty), and SDG-8 (decent work and economic growth).

THE UNIVERSITY AIMS TO:

1. Enhance equitable access to quality education for SEDGs through bridge courses, earn-while-learn programs, and outreach initiatives.



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2. Provide and ensure basic facilities and amenities for SEDGs to create inclusive, healthy, safe, and secure campus environments.
3. Establish SEDG cells to sensitize stakeholders, implement policies, monitor progress, ensure equal access to quality higher education, uphold dignity, promote egalitarian values, and address grievances in HEIs.

Governance of SEDGs Cell:

1. Chairperson SEDGs Cell
2. Senior Professor
3. In-charge of Internal Complaint Committee Member
4. Coordinator/Director of IQAC Member
5. SC/ST Representative Member
6. OBC Representative Member
7. Two student representatives belonging to SEDG members (one male and one female member)
8. Assistant Registrar/ Administrative Officer Member Secretary

*Chairperson and members to be nominated by the Head of the HEI.

Also the university is committed:

- ✓ To look after implementation of reservation policy for SCs/STs/OBCs/PwDs in the University.
- ✓ To take such follow-up measures for achieving the objectives and targets laid down by the Government of India for the above purpose.



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7. **APPROVAL & REVIEW:**

This policy has been approved by the university administration and will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current laws and best practices. Any amendments to the policy will be communicated to the university community.