



UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

(NAAC ACCREDITED 'A+' GRADE UNIVERSITY)

Baba Sahib Ambedkar Road, Jammu-180006 (J&K)

Academic Section

NOTIFICATION

(24/Jan/GEN/44)

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that the Vice-Chancellor, in anticipation of the approval of the Competent Bodies, is pleased to authorize the adoption of the Policy for 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities' in the University of Jammu (as given in Annexure).

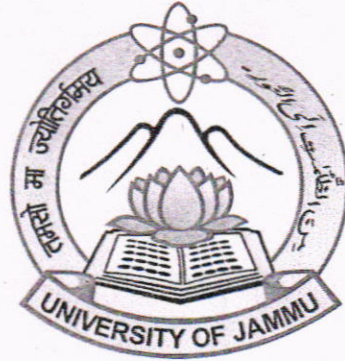
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Dated: 03-01-2024

DEAN ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

M. Singh
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Copy for information to:-

1. Special Secretary to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu for the kind information of the Worthy Vice-Chancellor please.
2. Sr. P.A. to the Dean Academic Affairs/Dean Research Studies/Dean, Planning & Development
3. Sr. P.A. to the Registrar/Controller of Examinations/Director, CDC/DDE
4. Rectors/Directors of the Offsite Campuses
5. All Heads of Teaching Departments of the University
6. Prof. Sarika Manhas, Coordinator, Disability Initiatives, University of Jammu
7. I/c Director, DIQA
8. Joint Registrar Finance/Examinations
9. Dy./Asstt. Registrar (Accounts/B&F/PRI)
10. Incharge, University Website with the request to upload this notification alongwith Annexure on the University website.



Policy for

'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities'

UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

(13 pages)
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I. Preamble:

Government of India became the signatory and ratified the Convention of the United Nations on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), in which inclusive education has been conceptualized 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).

To give effect to the United Nations Convention, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 (*Annexure 1*) was enacted replacing the earlier Act, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995. Section 16, 17, and 18 of its Chapter III (Education) pertains to the duty of the educational institutions and specific measures to promote and facilitate inclusive education and adult education respectively. Also, Section 19 of Chapter IV (Skill Development and Employment) of the Act encompasses provisions of imparting vocational training and self-employment. Moreover, the provisions such as reservation in employment and admissions at educational institutions have also been mentioned and adherence to these provisions/directions has been emphasized. Hence, with the emergence of the Act, it has become imperative for the HEIs to comply with such provisions to safeguard the interest of the persons with disabilities.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also envisages that education is the foremost primary measure to achieve economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. It highlights the corresponding changes required in curriculum, pedagogies, continuous assessment, and student support systems to ensure quality inclusive education. NEP acknowledges that students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) including persons with disabilities need help and support to make an effective transition to higher education wherein there is a need for incorporating high-quality support centres with adequate funds and academic resources to carry out these effectively and efficiently. Thus, as per NEP (2020), the HEIs are required to adopt measures to make the admission process and curriculum inclusive as well as develop technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes. Enabling Higher Education environments must facilitate that all students who experience disability have the

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right to access and participate in education, the ability to learn, and the right to exercise their voice, choice, and control in managing their own educational experiences. Their right to develop to their fullest potential and to be an active, valued citizen in the community and their right to an appropriate and adequate allocation of resources to access and participate meaningfully in education need to be fully protected. Ensuring equal participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all activities are the priority goals of the nation.

With the aim of improving the participation and learning experiences of persons with disabilities in HEIs, University Grants Commission (UGC) also came up with a comprehensive 'Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher education Institutions and Universities' in 2022. These guidelines highlight the need for reorienting and accelerating the higher education delivery in India.

II. Definitions/ Key Terms

(i) Person with disability: The Rights for Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 defines a person with disability as, "a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others"

(ii) 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

(iii) 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.

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(iv) **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.

III. Scope of 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities' Policy:

The disability policy is applicable to the students and research scholars with disability pursuing different courses both at the main campus of University of Jammu as well at its offsite campuses. It also pertains to employees of University of Jammu who have disability and special needs, and can benefit from reasonable accommodations made by the university to improve physical and curriculum accessibility from them.

IV. Need for 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities' Policy:

University of Jammu is a premier university established in 1969. It is a NAAC accredited A+ university and holds rank 52 among Indian universities in the NIRF ranking of 2022. The University constantly endeavours to become an innovative knowledge institution with capacity to meet the knowledge challenges of 21st century and contribute towards transformation of Jammu and Kashmir into a peaceful and prosperous state with balanced socio-cultural and economic development. University of Jammu is committed towards creating an accessible and inclusive ecosystem for all students including those with disabilities. The University envisions to create a disabled friendly campus/ barrier free environment and providing reasonable accommodations based on dual principles of "Inclusion and Accessibility". It is constantly working towards ensuring that students with disabilities receive equal treatment and opportunities in all aspects of campus life and are not placed at any substantial disadvantage in their access to services, assessment and teaching. It recognizes that students with disabilities are not mere passive recipients of care but are equal partners and action leaders in education and society both. The Disability Policy of University of Jammu is a reflection of its resolve to create a dynamic and inclusive system for all learners including those with disabilities.

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V. Policy Statement: The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Strive towards empowerment of persons with disabilities by ensuring equal opportunity, protection of rights and full participation.
2. Promote and foster an ecosystem which encourages positive, informed and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with disability.
3. Creating a universally accessible campus where programs, processes, services and environments are disabled friendly and inclusive.
4. Offer training, guidance, information and support to students with disabilities so that they become personally independent, socially competent, vocationally skilled, responsible decision-makers, and self-advocates, and above all contributing citizen of the country.

VI. Governing Principles:

1. University of Jammu supports the principle of universal access for all students, including those with a Disability, to its services and facilities. The University strives to ensure that no students are disadvantaged in their participation in any aspect of university life as a result of a Disability.
2. The University commits to the provision of a study environment where students will not be subject to discrimination, harassment or victimization because of a Disability.
3. University of Jammu firmly believes in the human rights of persons with disabilities. It ensures that PwDs have the same rights as the rest of the community; and promotes recognition and acceptance of these rights within the campus community.

VII. Affirmative Action for implementation of 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities' Policy:

1. Admission: Total five percent seats in all the university programmes will be reserved for persons with disabilities. The university will ensure the representation of all the types of

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disabilities listed in Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016) and as per government regulations from time to time.

2. Disclosure of Disability:

- A candidate desirous of availing reservation benefit at the time of admission to a University program shall have to produce relevant disability certification to be verified by a committee constituted by the Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu for the purpose. However, an individual with a disability who does not seek to take the benefit of reservation is not obliged to disclose their disability at any time.
- Additionally, evidence of a disability may be required for appropriate academic/infrastructure adjustments and accommodations to be provided at the University.

3. Universal Accessibility in Built Infrastructure:

- Guidelines of the nationwide flagship campaign - Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan along with 'Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-Free Built Environment for persons with Disability and Elderly Persons' (2016), Ministry of Urban Development to achieve universal access and enablement for persons with disabilities through infrastructure ecosystems involving built environment, transportation, and Information & Communication technologies will be followed at the University of Jammu.
- Academic buildings and learning space such as classrooms, lecture theatres, seminar rooms, tutorial rooms, laboratories of all kinds, along with all interactive spaces (both indoor and outdoor), auditoriums, hostels, washrooms, cafeteria/mess area will be made accessible to all students, staff, and faculty members with disabilities.
- Accessibility audits of the main campus and offsite campuses of University of Jammu will be conducted at regular intervals and recommended changes shall be implemented as deemed appropriate.
- All safety protocols needed for students with disabilities, including fire safety and for constructions/modification on campus are to be followed.

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4. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Systems:

- University of Jammu is committed to make reasonable adjustments to teaching learning process but without compromising the academic standards or inherent academic requirements of the course, or giving a student an undue academic advantage.
- The University will work on designing accessible curriculum based on both or either **accommodation** (a specific tool or a device or a strategy designed to support the needs of persons with disabilities), and **adaptation and modification** (changes in the level or method of instruction that a student receives as a result of his or her specific disability), as deemed suitable.
- As per need, the University will authorize its faculty to bring modifications or adaptations in the teaching learning process in terms of volume of work, time, support, level of difficulty, participation and physical adaptation.

5. **Examination Systems:** University of Jammu refers to UGC Notification F.No. 6-2/2013 (SCT) dated 14 January 2019 for the following provisions related to conduct written examinations for persons with benchmark disabilities as per the guidelines issued on 29th August 2018 by DoEPwD of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- Facility of Scribe/Reader/Lab Assistant will be allowed to any persons with benchmark disabilities as defined under section 29(r) of RPwD Act, 2016 and has limitations in writing including that of speed if so desired by him/her (Blindness, Locomotor Disability [both arms affected and cerebral palsy]).
- Persons with benchmark disabilities will be given as far as possible, the option for choosing the mode for taking an examination, i.e., in Braille, or the computer or in large print or even by recording the answers as the examining bodies can easily make use of technology to convert question paper in large print, e-text, or Braille, can also convert the Braille text in English or regional languages.
- Compensatory time (i.e., extra/additional time) will not be less than 20 minutes per hour of examination for the candidates who are allowed to use Scribe/Reader/Lab Assistant.
- Candidates will 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.

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- Proper sitting arrangements (preferable on the ground floor) shall be made before the commencement of the examination to avoid confusion or distraction during the day of the examination. Examination centre also should be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Where ever feasible the examining body will also provide reading materials in Braille or e-text or on a computer having suitable screen reading software for open book examination. Similarly, whenever online examination is held these will be in accessible format i.e., websites, question papers and all other study materials will be accessible as per the international standards laid down in this regard.
- Alternate objective questions in lieu of descriptive questions will 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.

(For details, the complete guideline may be referred at UGC website or https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7348678_Guidelines_Exam-Divyangjan-JAN-2019.pdf) (Annexure 2)

6. Accessibility of Library resource:

- University of Jammu will ensure that the library services (both at the central level as well as at the departmental level) is as per the needs of users with disability by providing them with well-structured library building ensuring barrier-free accessibility, reading material in alternative formats, assistive technologies, besides having the provision of sensitizing the existing staff to support the readers with disability in the libraries.
- The library shall provide helping hands, adjustable furniture, self-service circulation stations, accessible toilets, signages for easy movements to assist the reader with a physical disability.
- For those with visual impairment service of magnifiers, digital accessible information system, digitized catalogue, web-braille system, screen readers and screen magnifiers support with appropriate software such as JAWs, NVDA, Kurzweil etc., large-print books, scanners, converting documents via OCR reader, alternate format services, talking notice boards, provision of tactile maps at

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conspicuous places, accessible websites and digital libraries (Sugamya Pustakalaya) will be made available.

7. Inclusive Campus Life:

- University of Jammu shall ensure that its leadership at all levels is involved to counteract common biases against persons with disabilities while creating an inclusive campus climate.
- Apart from academic support the University is also committed to accessibility in culture, leisure and sports activities as well. It will promote, support and organize inter-college and inter-university, inter-institution activities involving persons with disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities shall be encouraged and given opportunities to participate in and travel for international university / academic exchange programs. For undertaking travel, reasonable accommodation, accompanying person/carer support where needed and other specific support sought by persons with disabilities will be included as part of the program and be funded.

8. Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM): Pursuant to University Grants Commission (Redress of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2019 notified vide its Gazette Notification on May 06, 2019, a Students Grievance Redressal Committee (SGRC) at the university will be formulated. The University will ensure an active and accessible grievance handling mechanism for persons with disabilities. Information about the GRM will be provided on the University website.

9. Governance and Monitoring of Accessibility and Inclusive Practices: Disability Initiatives Cell shall be responsible for ensuring that accessible and inclusive system is available at University of Jammu. The activities of the cell shall be governed and monitored by the Office of Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu. Also, an expert Advisory Committee for Disability Initiatives notified vide University order no: Estab/22/30205-304 dated: 04-02-2022 shall forward suggestions/recommendations as and when required.

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VIII. Students' responsibilities:

- *Self-identification and Providing Required Documentation:* A student/ scholar admitted to the University for pursuing any course shall have to self-identify with the Office of Coordinator, Disability Initiatives Cell, University of Jammu. The student shall also be required to provide comprehensive professional documentation of their disability to the said office.
- *Informing the concerned Offices if requesting for accommodations:* Students with disabilities desirous of availing reasonable accommodation need to self-identify and present a written request to the Office of Coordinator, Disability Initiatives Cell, University of Jammu, who will then recommend the same if deemed appropriate to the concerned Head of the Department/ Director.
- *Timely Action:* It's the student's responsibility to request for necessary accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services in a timely manner. Students should alert the Office of Coordinator, Disability Initiatives Cell immediately in case there are any concerns about their accommodations.
- *Active participation:* Students are expected to be an active participant in their dialogues with the office for accommodations or any other assistance. They should respond to all communication from the Office of Coordinator, Disability Initiatives Cell as and when requested.

IX. Responsibilities of Disability Initiatives Cell, University of Jammu:

Disability Initiatives Cell of University of Jammu shall be responsible for implementing accessibility and inclusive practices to empower the students with disabilities and would also serve as a resource centre to provide rehabilitation services. The following shall be the responsibilities of the Disability Initiatives Cell:

- Creating provisions for making admission process accessible, so that aspiring students with disabilities are aware about the University being disabled friendly and accessible.
- Serving as a single point of contact office that is equipped to assist differently abled students in matters related to admission, reservation, fee concession, examination procedures, services available, accommodations and any other related issue.

- Making rigorous efforts to promote and foster culture of inclusion in all the courses, programs and events to be conducted inside/ on the University campus.
- Creating a database of students with disabilities at the University in order to build up a sound network and collaboration with them, and also providing them counselling for better learning support.
- Establishing coordination with government and non-government or other funding agencies with an aim to provide financial support and other resources required for inclusion and educational empowerment of the students with disabilities.
- Conducting accessibility audit of the various offices and departments of the University and suggest measures for converting them into fully accessible buildings as per the guidelines of the Accessible India campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, GOI.
- Developing and strengthening collaborations with reputed National agencies/ organizations/ institutes working for the welfare and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities through having MOUs and exchange activities.
- Conducting skill development training programmes for PwDs to sensitize and increase their employability potential according to their interest, qualifications and nature of disability.
- Organizing/ conducting sensitization activities such as seminars/ workshops/ conferences/exhibitions/special lectures/debates for all members of the university fraternity and general community on a regular basis for creating awareness about the needs of persons with disabilities and other contemporary issues concerning disabled.
- Liaising with other offices of the University entrusted with the responsibility of procuring assistive devices and other special equipment to augment educational services for differently abled persons.
- Promoting and strengthening voluntary effort for assisting persons with disabilities as buddies, in their academic pursuits such as providing amanuensis/ scribes during exams, recording and scanning of books, sign language, use of assistive devices and technologies etc.

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