CHITKARA UNIVERSITY
PUNJAB

Explore Your Potential

VERSION 2.0

**Approved in the 25th Governing Body Meeting
Vide Agenda Item GB 25.17, Dated 29 February, 2024**

**DIVERSITY, EQUALITY & INCLUSION POLICY
POLICY NUMBER: HR/2024/01
CHITKARA UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB**

CONTENT

1. OBJECTIVE:

1.1. The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy is to set out the University's commitment to an inclusive and supportive environment for Students, Staff, Contractors, Consultants, Trainees, Retainers, Vendors, and Visitors that is free from discrimination, where all can participate, and everyone has the opportunity to explore their potential.

1.2. Equally, the Policy sets out the University's expectations, where each member of the University community has a responsibility to adhere and uphold the Policy.

1.3. To create a truly inclusive work environment, bringing self-awareness to leaders on diverse teams and foster a safe environment where everyone feels heard, respected, and valued.

1.4. The University is committed to provide equal opportunity to all and attract a diverse and effective workforce with a wide range of abilities, experiences and skills based on the University's core values which are strongly aligned with society, humanity, and social justice.

2. SCOPE:

All employees, Students, Consultants, Trainees, Interns, Retainers, Vendors etc.

3. GUIDELINES OF THE POLICY:

3.1 The University aims to foster the development of an inclusive culture throughout the institution and overcome barriers to equality by building capability across its faculty and staff.

3.2 The University shall listen to different communities with a learning mindset and help them build a world that is safer and more inclusive.

3.3 The University shall prioritize equality, diversity, inclusion and form the foundation of the University's Strategic Plan at all levels.

3.4 The University shall adopt flexible approaches to ensure that thevoices of the stakeholders are considered appropriate.

3.5 The University shall ensure that everyone has fair opportunity to grow and develop their skills and knowledge to ensure a diverse talent pipeline at all levels.

3.6 The University shall provide a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and is free from any form of inappropriate behaviour. The employees shall be encouraged to give their best. 'Dignity at Work' underwrites creating and sustaining a productive working environment for all staff, where discrimination or harassment does not occur and is known to be unacceptable.

3.7 The University shall facilitate a conducive working pattern for all the employees and staff.

3.8 Employment practices in The University shall be based on merit, qualifications, and competencies suitable to the given role; and not be influenced or affected by an applicant's or employee's gender, caste, religion, age (within statutory limits), marital status, nationality, ancestry, ethnicity, geographical origin, sexual orientation, disability, proximity to another employee, or any other trait protected by law.

3.9 The University shall not tolerate any form of bias or discrimination against any employee, by virtue of any above indicated trait.

3.10 Existing employees may provide references in recruitment; however, no candidate shall be given any preference as hiring decisions are solely based on merit.

3.11 The University shall value everyone and be empathetic, fair, respectful, and inclusive. This holds for employees, participants in, or contributors to our work, irrespective of background, characteristics, or attributes.

3.12 Any employee found to be involved in unlawful discrimination during the hiring process shall be liable to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

3.13 Admission to the University is open for all students on a non-discriminatory basis with regard to race, colour, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, behavior, age, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

3.14 Possibility for female Ph.D. students getting pregnant during their studies to temporarilysuspend their research and join another cohort at a later time.

3.15 Child Care facility is available for female staff/students having children.

3.16 Academic support and other financial resources such as potential scholarships for female students/staff facing financial difficulties or lack of financial support from their families decided on a merit's basis.

3.17 Equal access to education and opportunities, including access to mentor programs designed to prepare students for top-positions or further studies.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.1 All University students, staff, Contractors, and Vendors have equalities related responsibilities.

4.2 The University is responsible for:
- Ensuring that the University meets its legal obligations relating to equality.
- Ensuring that equality analysis is carried out on all senior level proposed policies and decisions where appropriate.

4.3 Dean/Directors/Reporting Managers are responsible for:
- Ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline and grievance are carried out in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.
- Fostering a culture in which equality and diversity considerations are embedded into their work areas.
- Ensuring that staff and students are encouraged and enabled to reach their full potential.

4.4 Office of Talent Management Team is responsible for:
- Supporting Managers in ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline and grievance are carried out in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.
- Regular and continued gender sensitization training for all the employees from time to time for updating of policy and its awareness.

4.5 Students are responsible for:
- Upholding the principles of this policy.
- Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity.
- Upholding and implementing the aims of this policy.
- Promoting equality of opportunity.
- Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity.

5. BREACH OF POLICY:

The University shall take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the Policy by students, staff, contractors, or visitors. Any instances of non- adherence will be investigated with the intent of resolving matters. Where appropriate, such instances may be considered under the relevant disciplinary policy and procedures.

6. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE:

Chitkara University is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors. This commitment is grounded in the university's core values and is integral to achieving academic excellence and personal growth. To ensure these values are upheld, Chitkara University has established a comprehensive complaint procedure to address any concerns or violations related to diversity, equality, and inclusion.

6.1 Scope

The DEI complaint procedure applies to all members of the Chitkara University community, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It covers complaints related to discrimination, harassment, and any form of unfair treatment based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by law.

6.2 Complaint Procedure

6.2.1 Initial Steps and Informal Resolution:

- Identification and Reporting: Any member of the university community who experiences or witnesses' behaviour that violates the DEI policy is encouraged to report the incident promptly. Reports can be made in person, via email, or through the university's online reporting system.
- Informal Resolution: - In some cases, issues can be resolved informally. This may involve a mediated discussion between the parties involved, facilitated by a DEI officer or another designated university official. Informal resolution aims to address the concern quickly and amicably, without the need for formal investigation.

6.2.2 Formal Complaint Process:

- Filing a Formal Complaint: If informal resolution is not appropriate or successful, the complainant may file a formal complaint. This must be done in writing, detailing the nature of the complaint, the individuals involved, and any relevant evidence.

- Acknowledgment and Initial Assessment: Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the DEI office will acknowledge receipt within five business days. An initial assessment will determine whether the complaint falls within the scope of the DEI policy and whether there is sufficient information to proceed with an investigation.

6.2.3 Investigation:

- Appointment of an Investigator: If the complaint proceeds, an impartial investigator will be appointed. This individual may be a member of the DEI office or an external expert, depending on the nature and complexity of the case.
- Investigation Process: The investigator will conduct a thorough investigation, which includes interviewing the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses. The investigator will also review relevant documents, emails, and other evidence.

- Confidentiality: Throughout the process, confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation.

6.2.4 Findings and Resolution:
- Investigation Report: Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will prepare a report outlining the findings and conclusions. This report will be submitted to the DEI office and relevant university authorities.
- Decision and Actions: - Based on the investigation report, the university will determine whether a violation of the DEI policy occurred. If so, appropriate corrective actions will be taken. These actions may include disciplinary measures, policy changes, or additional training and education.
- Communication of Outcome: The complainant and the respondent will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken. Both parties will have the opportunity to request a review of the decision if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.

6.2.5 Appeals Process:
- Grounds for Appeal: Either party may appeal the decision on specific grounds, such as procedural errors, new evidence, or perceived bias in the investigation.
- Appeal Submission: Appeals must be submitted in writing within ten business days of receiving the decision. The appeal should clearly state the grounds for the appeal and provide any supporting documentation.
- Review of Appeal: An appeal review committee, independent of the initial investigation, will review the appeal. This committee will assess the merits of the appeal and determine whether the original decision should be upheld, modified, or overturned.

6.2.6 Support and Resources:
- Support Services: Chitkara University provides support services for individuals involved in the complaint process, including counselling, academic support, and advisory services. These services are available to both complainants and respondents.
- Training and Education: Ongoing training and education programs on diversity, equality, and inclusion are offered to all university members to promote a respectful and inclusive campus culture.

CONCLUSION:
Chitkara University's DEI complaint procedure is designed to ensure that all concerns related to diversity, equality, and inclusion are addressed promptly, fairly, and effectively. By adhering to this procedure, the university aims to uphold its commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone.

7. UNIVERSITY ERP SYSTEM
The ERP system at the university plays a crucial role in tracking and analyzing applications and admissions from various underrepresented groups. The system is configured to capture and monitor data for categories such as:

7.1 Ethnic Minorities:
The ERP platform allows applicants to voluntarily disclose their ethnic background. This data is securely stored and used to measure the representation of different ethnic groups in the application pool and subsequent admissions. The system helps ensure compliance with diversity

goals and affirmative action policies, providing real-time dashboards and reports on the demographics of ethnic minorities.

7.2 Low-Income Students:
To track applications from low-income students, the ERP integrates data from financial aid applications, such as scholarships and income documentation. This enables the university to identify and monitor students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and assess their admission trends and outcomes.

7.3 Non-Traditional Students:
The ERP system includes features to capture information about applicants who may not follow the typical educational trajectory, such as older students, those returning after a break, or those working while studying. The system tracks and measures their applications and admission success, providing insight into how well the university accommodates these students.

7.4 Women:
Gender-based tracking is a standard feature of the ERP. The system allows the university to measure application and admission rates for female applicants, ensuring an equal opportunity environment. Specific programs or scholarships aimed at increasing female representation are also tracked through the system.

7.5 LGBT Students:
For applicants who choose to disclose their gender identity or sexual orientation, the ERP system ensures confidential data collection, helping the university measure the inclusion and success of LGBTQ+ applicants and students. It also assists in tracking outcomes of any diversity initiatives targeting this group.

7.6 Disabled Students:
The ERP integrates fields for applicants to indicate any disabilities. This information helps the university measure the representation and progress of disabled students, ensuring they receive necessary accommodations. The ERP system also facilitates communication between students and the disability services office for additional support throughout their academic journey.

7.7 Newly Settled Refugee Students:
The system tracks applicants with refugee status, providing insights into how well the university supports their admission and integration. This data is essential for assessing the effectiveness of targeted support programs for refugee students.

8. NON-DISCRIMINATORY ADMISSIONS POLICY:
The university maintains a clear and transparent admissions policy that ensures equal opportunity for all applicants, irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic background. The admissions process is designed to assess each applicant on their individual merits, focusing on academic qualifications, personal achievements, and potential, without bias or prejudice. Certainprinciples of the Policy are as:

8.1 Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment:
The admissions policy strictly adheres to principles of fairness, providing all applicants an equal chance based on their academic credentials and other relevant criteria. Selection criteria are uniformly applied to avoid any form of discrimination.

8.2   Merit-Based Admissions:
Admissions decisions are primarily based on the academic and personal accomplishments of the candidates. The ERP system ensures that all applicants are evaluated objectively, with no favouritism shown towards any group, ensuring the process is merit-driven.

8.3   Support for Diversity:
The university is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment. Therefore, while the admissions policy is non-discriminatory, it incorporates positive discrimination or affirmative action measures in some cases, which are designed to enhance the representation of historically underrepresented or disadvantaged groups, such as:
- Ethnic Minorities
- Low-Income Students
- Women
- LGBT+ Students
- Disabled Students
- Non-Traditional Students
- Newly Settled Refugee Students

These measures are part of a broader commitment to creating a balanced and equitable student body, acknowledging that certain groups may face structural barriers to higher education.

8.3   Positive Discrimination Policies (if applicable):
University applies positive discrimination or affirmative action in admissions. These policies are designed to:
- Ensure increased access for underrepresented groups.
- Correct historical imbalances by offering additional support, scholarships, or reserved seats to those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Promote a diverse academic environment that enhances the learning experience for all students.

Rationale for Positive Discrimination:
The logic behind these positive measures is grounded in the belief that diversity in education enriches the academic community and helps break down barriers faced by marginalized groups. These policies are carefully designed to not disadvantage any group, but to create equal starting points for all applicants.

Monitoring and Transparency:
To ensure compliance with non-discriminatory principles, the admissions process is regularly audited, and detailed records are maintained. Feedback from applicants and periodic reviews of admission outcomes help the university adjust its policies and ensure they remain fair and equitable for all.
This approach emphasizes that while the university's policy is fundamentally non-discriminatory, any positive discrimination measures are logically explained and justified to enhance inclusivity and equity. You can adapt the response to align with the university's specific practices.

9.   **AMENDMENT OF POLICY:** The University reserves the right to amend, abrogate, modify, revise, or withdraw any or all clauses of this policy depending upon any exigency. Any deviations to the above points should be signed off by the Pro Vice Chancellor - HR.

10.   **INTERPRETATION OF POLICY:** The Office of Talent Management is the final authority to any interpretation of this policy.