The Policy for

Barrier-Free Access to Persons with Disabilities

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1   Introduction

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 firmly bars discrimination against individuals with physical or mental disabilities. GITAM Deemed to be University is wholeheartedly committed to eradicating all forms of discrimination, including those rooted in disabilities. GITAM is dedicated to fostering a comprehensive and inclusive teaching and learning environment that ensures the well-being of both students and employees facing incapacities, treating them with utmost fairness.

GITAM strives to create an educational landscape where everyone can thrive regardless of abilities. We are resolute in our efforts to structure our programs, services, and activities to promote accessibility for all students. Every authority within the university is dedicated to offering unwavering support to those with different abilities, ensuring that all aspects of our programs, services, and activities are as beneficial and accommodating as possible.

These guiding principles are not limited to any specific group; they extend to all university faculty and staff members. At GITAM Deemed to be University, we are united in our commitment to inclusivity and pledge to uphold these principles throughout our academic community.

2   Policy Objectives

2.1   Fostering Inclusivity
The foremost objective is to cultivate an inclusive culture that eradicates discrimination, exploitation, and exclusion of individuals with disabilities, both among students and staff, across all domains of education and work.

2.2   Effective Support Mechanism
GITAM aims to establish a robust regulatory framework to efficiently provide essential services to disabled students and staff members within the institute.

2.3   Legislative Compliance
Ensuring adherence to all pertinent legislation about individuals with disabilities is a pivotal goal of this policy.

2.4 Accessible and Inclusive Education:

GITAM dedicated to offering education that is accessible and inclusive for all, fostering an environment where every learner can thrive.

2.5 Equal Participation and Opportunities:

This policy is committed to enabling full participation and equitable opportunities for the development of individuals with disabilities, promoting their integration into all aspects of institute life.

2.6 Allocating Adequate Resources:

GITAM prioritize allocating the necessary budget to realize the above-mentioned objectives and successfully implement disability-inclusive measures effectively.

2.7 Unified Definitions:

The terminologies utilized within this policy adhere to the definitions outlined in Chapter I of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

3 Disability

Disability encompasses various conditions, encompassing physical and sensory limitations (such as mobility, vision, or hearing impairments). Moreover, it extends to disabilities arising from chronic illnesses and syndromes, including those that might not be immediately visible, such as psychological and emotional disorders, learning disabilities, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, arthritis, epilepsy, Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI), and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The extent and nature of disabilities often vary, necessitating a corresponding variety of accommodations that should be customized to meet the specific requirements of each individual.

3.1 Eligible Persons with Disability

The term "eligible Persons with a disability" refers to a person with a disability who possesses the necessary qualifications to participate in any program or activity offered by the institution. For admission purposes, a qualified individual with a disability must meet the academic criteria and satisfy the educational prerequisites for specific courses, degrees, or certification programs. In terms of employment, training, job assignments, and career advancement, an eligible individual with a disability should be capable of performing the fundamental duties inherent to the job.

However, there may be exceptions allowed by governmental regulations.

3.2 Empowerment Initiatives for Individuals with Disabilities:

GITAM has a supporting system to provide comprehensive education and support for individuals with disabilities. The Committee is in place to look after the welfare of the differently abled students and provide all required support to excel in life. The committee collaborates closely with an expert committee for persons with disabilities to effectively implement the university's disability policy.

URL : https://iqac.gitam.edu/mandatory-disclosure

The primary functions of the committee encompass:

3.2.1 Educational Guidance

Offering guidance and counseling to students with disabilities regarding suitable courses for higher education.

3.2.2 Accessible Admissions

Facilitating admissions for students with disabilities through the open quota system while adhering to government policies on fee concessions, examination procedures, and reservation policies.

3.2.3 Educational Assessment

Evaluating the educational needs of enrolled students with disabilities in higher education settings.

3.2.4 Teacher Awareness

Organizing awareness programs for educators, equipping them with effective teaching and evaluation methods tailored to students with disabilities.

3.2.5 Employment Support

Assisting students with disabilities in securing suitable employment opportunities upon completing their studies.

3.2.6 Remedial Coaching:

Regularly conducting Remedial Coaching Classes to enhance the academic progress of individuals with disabilities.

Through these initiatives, GITAM is committed to creating an inclusive educational environment that empowers individuals with disabilities to achieve their academic and professional aspirations.

4 Accessibility Policy:

The accessibility policy is centered around ensuring that all University services, activities, and advantages are fully available to qualified individuals with disabilities. The institute is dedicated to creating a disabled-friendly campus by implementing various provisions. The administration and faculty are committed to offering appropriate and reasonable accommodations for each individual with a disability, actively resolving access challenges. GITAM aims to establish a barrier-free and inclusive environment for individuals with diverse abilities.

GITAM adhere to the following principles of accessibility:

- All undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD programs and activities must be accessible.

- Accessible textbooks and study materials will be provided to all students with disabilities.

- Comprehensive awareness programs will be conducted for teachers and non-teaching staff to address accessibility issues.

- Web services will comply with national and international accessibility standards, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and Government of India Guidelines for Web Accessibility.

- GITAM reserves about 3% seats for persons with disabilities, ensuring representation for various types of disabilities outlined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 under government regulations.

5 Examination Policy:

GITAM is committed to making reasonable adjustments to the educational plan and assessment framework to cater to the unique needs of students with disabilities. We prioritize providing sensible accommodations to ensure the inclusion of all students with disabilities. We have established guidelines and regulations from the

examination department, which include provisions for using scribes during exams.

URL: https://iqac.gitam.edu/nc3/dvv/Criterion_7/cri_7_717/8_Scribe_Policy.pdf

Accessibility and Access Audit for Persons with Disabilities:

Facilities for Employees and Students:

- Installation of ramps, tactile paths, Braille lifts/sign boards and accessible toilets.

- Provision of two-wheelers to teachers and staff.

- Ongoing facilities are provided as per government regulations.

- Our website is designed to be accessible to PWD students.

- Disability sensitization sessions are integral to both student and employee induction programs.

- Staff members are trained to assist individuals with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities.

- Audio books are made available.

- The institution boasts a disabled-friendly, barrier-free environment.

Through these measures, we are dedicated to ensuring that all community members can fully participate, access resources, and thrive within our university's environment.

URL:

- https://iqac.gitam.edu/nc3/dvv/Criterion_7/cri_7_717/4_Geotagged_photographs_divyangjan_Friendly_washrooms_all_campuses.pdf

- https://iqac.gitam.edu/nc3/dvv/Criterion_7/cri_7_717/5_Ramps_Lifts_facilities_across_all_Campuses-Geotagged_pictures.pdf

- https://iqac.gitam.edu/nc3/dvv/Criterion_7/cri_7_717/7_Assistive_technology.pdf

- https://iqac.gitam.edu/nc3/dvv/Criterion_7/cri_7_717/8_Facilities_for_scribe_humanAssistance_readersoftware.pdf

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