



## **Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation**

(Category -1, Deemed to be University estd. u/s. 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)

◆ Approved by AICTE ◆ ISO 21001:2018 Certified

**Campus:** Green Fields, Vaddeswaram - 522 302, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA.

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Date: 26-06-2024

# **EQUAL OPPURTUNITY FACILITATION CELL POLICY**

## **1. PREAMBLE**

The Equal Opportunity Facilitation Cell (EOFC) is established to promote an inclusive, fair, and supportive academic environment for all members of the institution in accordance with the guidelines of the All-India Council for Technical Education. The Cell aims to ensure that students and staff, particularly those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), minorities, women, and persons with disabilities, receive equal access to educational opportunities and institutional resources without discrimination. It works to uphold the principles of equality, social justice, and respect for diversity by creating awareness, providing support mechanisms, and addressing concerns related to discrimination or unequal treatment within the campus community.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

To eradicate discrimination only based on religion, race, gender, place of birth, caste, or disability, particularly against the members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, socially and educationally backward classes, economically weaker sections, persons with disabilities, or any of them, and to promote full equity and inclusion amongst the stakeholders in higher education institutions.

## **3. DEFINITIONS**

1) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires-

(a) "Act" means the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 (3 of 1956);

(b) "Aggrieved Person" means a person who has any complaint in the matters relating to or connected with the grievances under these regulations.

(c) "Caste-based discrimination" means discrimination only on the basis of caste or tribe against the members of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes.

(d) "Commission" means the University Grants Commission established under the University Grants Commission Act, 1956.

(e) "Discrimination" means any unfair, differential, or biased treatment or any such act against any stakeholder, whether explicit or implicit, on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, disability, or any of them. It also includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and of imposing conditions on any stakeholder or group of stakeholders which are incompatible with human dignity.

(f) "Equity" means a level playing field for all stakeholders with respect to the entitlement and opportunity for the enjoyment of all legitimate rights.

(g) “Equity Committee” means the Committee constituted by the head of the higher education institution.

(h) “Equity Helpline” means a helpline established and operated by an HEI; (i) “Equal Opportunity Centre” means the centre established under these Regulations by an HEI; (j) “Faculty Members” means teachers who are working for the HEI.

(k) “Gender” means and includes male, female, and third gender.

(l) “Grievance” means and includes complaint(s) made by an aggrieved person in respect of discrimination under these regulations.

(m) “Head of the Institution” means the Vice-Chancellor in case of a university or a Deemed to be university, the Principal or the Director or such other designation as the executive head of the institution or the college is referred.

(n) “Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)” means a university within the meaning of clause (f) of section 2, a college within the meaning of clause (b) of sub-section (1) of section 12 A, and an institution deemed to be a university, declared under section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956.

(o) “Ombudsperson” means the Ombudsperson appointed under the University Grants Commission (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023, as amended from time to time.

(p) “Staff” means the persons, other than faculty members, who are working for the HEI.

(q) “Stakeholders” means students, faculty members, staff, and members of the managing committee, including the Head of the HEI.

(r) “Student” means a person enrolled, or seeking admission to be enrolled, in any HEI through any mode, i.e., Formal, Open and Distance Learning (ODL), or online.

(s) “University” means a university established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act, or a State Act and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognized by the Commission in accordance with the regulations made in this behalf under the Act; (2) Words and expressions used and not defined herein but defined in the Act or in the General Clauses Act, 1897, shall have the meanings as respectively assigned to them in the Act or in the General Clauses Act, 1897, as the case may be.

#### **4. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE**

The composition of the Equity Committee shall be the following:

- i. The Head of the Institution shall be the ex-officio Chairperson.
- ii. Three Professors/Senior Faculty Members of the HEI, as Members.
- iii. One Staff Member, other than a teacher, of the HEI, as a Member.
- iv. Two representatives from civil society having relevant experience, as Members.
- v. Two student representatives, to be nominated based on academic merit/excellence in sports/performance in co-curricular activities, as Special Invitees.
- vi. The Coordinator of the Equal Opportunity Centre shall act as the ex-officio Member Secretary.

## **5. PROCEDURE IN CASE OF INCIDENT**

- a) An aggrieved person may report any incident of discrimination on an online portal, in writing, or by sending an email to the Coordinator of the Equal Opportunity Centre. The identity of the aggrieved person shall be kept confidential if requested.
- b) The aggrieved person shall also have the option of reporting the incident to the Equity Helpline. The information received on the helpline shall be forwarded to the police authorities concerned if, prima facie, a case under the penal laws is made out.
- c) The Equity Committee, upon receipt of such information, shall meet within 24 hours to take appropriate action. The Equity Committee may also refer the matter to a committee constituted under any other Regulations of the UGC or under any other law for the time being in force, if it is of the opinion that the matter can be better dealt with by that committee; or it is required to be dealt with by that committee in accordance with the provisions of regulations or law; or that committee is already seized of the matter.
- d) The Equity Committee shall thereafter submit its report to the Head of the Institution within 15 working days. A copy of the Equity Committee's report shall also be sent to the aggrieved person.
- e) Upon receipt of the report from the Equity Committee, the Head of the Institution shall initiate further action as per the rules of the HEI within 7 working days. However, if a case under the penal laws is made out, police authorities shall be informed forthwith.
- f) In the event any complaint is made against the Head of the Institution, the meeting of the Equity Committee chaired by the Coordinator of the EOC, and the report of the Equity Committee shall be forwarded to the next higher authority of the Head of the Institution.

## **6. PROCEDURES FOR REGISTERING COMPLAINTS & ENQUIRY**

- (1) A person aggrieved by the report of the Equity Committee may prefer an appeal before the Ombudsperson within 30 days from the date of receipt of such report. The ombudsperson may appoint an amicus curiae to facilitate the hearing of an appeal.
- (2) An amicus curiae appointed by the Ombudsperson shall be paid a reasonable fee by the HEI.
- (3) The Ombudsperson shall make all efforts to dispose of the appeal within a period of 30 days as per the University Grants Commission (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023, as amended from time to time.

## **7. APPEAL**

- (1) A person aggrieved by the report of the Equity Committee may prefer an appeal before the Ombudsperson within 30 days of receipt of such report. The ombudsperson may appoint an amicus curiae to facilitate the hearing of an appeal.
  - (2) An amicus curiae appointed by the Ombudsperson shall be paid a reasonable fee by the HEI.
  - (3) The Ombudsperson shall make all efforts to dispose of the appeal within a period of 30 days as per the University Grants Commission (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023, as amended from time to time.
- This policy is approved in 2EC2 conducted on 26-06-2024,

  
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