8.2.3 Employment policy on discrimination

Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) has developed a comprehensive policy framework to address and prevent discrimination in the workplace, encompassing various protected characteristics including religion, sexuality, gender, age, and refugee status.

CUSAT is committed to creating and maintaining an educational, working, and living environment free from discrimination and harassment. The university's policies are designed to foster an inclusive atmosphere where all individuals are valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential, regardless of their background or identity.

Key Points:

1. Legal and Constitutional Alignment: CUSAT's anti-discrimination policies are aligned with Indian constitutional provisions, particularly Articles 15 and 16, which prohibit discrimination based on religion, sex, ethnicity, caste, or origin of birth. The university also adheres to relevant anti-discrimination laws, such as the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 (replaced by Code on Wages, 2019) and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019. (Source: EDI policy.docx)

2. Comprehensive Protection: The university's policy prohibits discrimination and harassment based on a wide range of characteristics, including race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity, pregnancy, and any other legally protected characteristic. (Source: CUSAT_Anti-discrimination policy.docx)

3. Scope of Application: The anti-discrimination policies apply to all members of the university community, including students, staff (permanent and contractual), applicants for work or study, visitors, contractors, service providers, and suppliers. (Source: EDI policy.docx)

4. Specialized Committees: CUSAT has established several committees to address specific forms of discrimination: a. Internal Complaints Committee: Deals with harassment complaints b. Anti-Ragging Cell: Addresses ragging issues c. Committee for Caste-based Discrimination: Handles complaints related to discrimination against SC/ST/OBC individuals (Source: CUSAT_Anti-discrimination policy.docx)

5. Gender Equality Initiatives: The university has implemented a Gender Sensitization Plan that includes: a. Integrating gender policy with service rules and the Internal Complaints Committee b. Focusing on Gender and STEM in academic and outreach activities c. Facilitating a network of gender equality advisors d. Conducting open discussions about sexualities and sexual orientation, e. Considering period leave for women and transgender individuals (Source: Gender Sensitization Plan.pdf)

6. Reporting and Complaint Procedures: CUSAT encourages all members of the university community to report instances of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. The university has established fair and reliable procedures to determine policy violations and implement prompt and effective remedies. (Source: CUSAT_Anti-discrimination policy.docx)

7. Inclusive Workplace Practices: The university is committed to developing comprehensive diversity training for faculty and staff, establishing affinity groups and support networks for employees from underrepresented backgrounds, and conducting periodic climate surveys to gauge employee satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. (Source: EDI policy.docx)

8. Accountability and Continuous Improvement: CUSAT has implemented a system for measuring and reporting progress on diversity and inclusion goals. This includes developing a comprehensive framework to track progress, publishing annual reports on diversity and inclusivity metrics, and utilizing feedback from all stakeholders to refine strategies and adapt approaches. (Source: EDI policy.docx)

In conclusion, CUSAT's policy on ending discrimination in the workplace demonstrates a comprehensive and proactive approach to fostering an inclusive environment. By addressing various forms of discrimination, establishing specialized committees, implementing gender equality initiatives, and promoting continuous improvement, the university aims to create a workplace where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their religion, sexuality, gender, age, or refugee status.

Supporting documents

- CUSAT_Anti-discrimination policy-https://iqac.cusat.ac.in/uploads/web/files/_CUSAT_Anti-discrimination_policy.pdf

- Gender Sensitization plan-https://iqac.cusat.ac.in/uploads/web/files/Gender_Sensitization_Plan.pdf

- EDI policy-https://iqac.cusat.ac.in/uploads/web/files/EDI_policy.pdf