



COCHIN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY POLICY

Introduction

Indian Constitution provides social safeguarding provisions for all Indian citizens. Article 15 forbids discrimination based on religion, sex, ethnicity, caste, or origin of birth. Equal opportunity in matters of public employment (which does not specify the private sector) is mandatory under Article 16(1). Article 16 (2) ensures that no one is discriminated against for any position or office under the state based on religion, race, descent, place of birth, caste, sex, residency, or any combination of these grounds. Antidiscrimination law that is comprehensive and stand-alone has yet to be in effect in India. However, there are legislations such as the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 (replaced by Code on Wages, 2019), the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act of 2017, and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019 all contain some anti-discrimination provisions. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, commonly referred to as the 'PoSH Act', is an Indian law enacted with the objective of making workplaces safer for women by preventing, prohibiting and redressing acts of sexual harassment against them at the workplace.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Statement

At CUSAT, we are driven by a profound belief in the transformative power of equality, diversity, and inclusivity. Our institution stands as a beacon of progress, dedicated to fostering an environment where all individuals are celebrated and respected, irrespective of their background, identity, or experiences. We firmly believe that a diverse and inclusive community enriches the fabric of our educational, research, and social endeavours, enabling us to thrive as a true centre of excellence.

We commit ourselves unwaveringly to cultivating an atmosphere where each person feels valued, heard, and empowered to reach their full potential. Discrimination, prejudice, and



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bias have no place within our walls, and we actively challenge any barriers that impede the path to equality. Through our policies, practices, and curricula, we strive to dismantle systemic inequalities, ensuring equitable access to opportunities and resources for all members of our university community.

To achieve this vision, we embrace diversity in all its manifestations. We welcome individuals from diverse ethnicities, races, cultures, religions, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and perspectives. Our dedication to inclusivity extends to persons with disabilities, and we are committed to providing reasonable accommodations to ensure that they can fully engage in every aspect of university life.

We foster a culture of inclusivity by promoting open dialogue and mutual understanding. We actively encourage respectful conversations about diverse viewpoints and encourage a free exchange of ideas that challenge assumptions and broaden horizons. Through this commitment to openness, we celebrate the mosaic of experiences and ideas that form the foundation of our collective intellectual and social growth.

Our aspiration to be a leading institution in equality, diversity, and inclusivity is grounded in continuous self-assessment and improvement. We strive to hold ourselves accountable for our progress, acknowledging that achieving true inclusivity requires sustained effort and collaboration. As we evolve, we pledge to involve all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and community partners, in shaping our policies and initiatives.

Through unwavering dedication to equality, diversity, and inclusivity, CUSAT aims to be a catalyst for societal change, preparing our graduates to lead with empathy and compassion, and inspiring them to champion these values in their respective fields. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community that thrives on the principles of respect, understanding, and unity, embracing the diversity of the human experience and harnessing its collective strength to build a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Finally, it is stated that we do not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment in any form on the grounds of

- age
- sex



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- sexual orientation
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (includes: race, colour, nationality- including citizenship, ethnic or national origins)
- religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief

Scope

The policy is applicable to all staff (permanent/contractual), students and applicants to work or study at the University. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and students should treat each other, visitors, contractors, service providers, suppliers and any other persons associated with the functions of the University.

Objectives

Objective 1: Enhancing Campus Diversity

- Implement targeted recruitment and outreach strategies to attract a diverse student body, faculty, and staff, reflecting a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and identities.
- Establish partnerships with organizations and communities to facilitate access and support for underrepresented groups in higher education.
- Regularly assess and analyze demographic data to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement in promoting diversity and inclusion.

Objective 2: Cultivating an Inclusive Learning Environment

- Foster a curriculum that incorporates diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultures, promoting understanding and empathy among students and faculty.
- Provide training and resources for educators to create inclusive classrooms and engage students in meaningful dialogues on diversity-related topics.



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- Establish a system for students to report and address instances of discrimination or bias, ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

Objective 3: Promoting Equity in Access and Support

- Develop and implement financial aid and scholarship programs that specifically address the needs of students from marginalized backgrounds, ensuring equitable access to higher education.
- Establish support services and mentoring programs to assist students facing systemic barriers, providing the necessary resources to thrive academically and personally.
- Address digital accessibility challenges and provide assistive technologies to cater to the needs of students with disabilities.

Objective 4: Creating Inclusive Workplace Practices

- Develop comprehensive diversity training for faculty and staff to foster an inclusive work culture and promote equity in hiring, promotion, and professional development opportunities.
- Establish affinity groups and support networks for employees from underrepresented backgrounds, encouraging a sense of belonging and camaraderie within the university community.
- Conduct periodic climate surveys to gauge employee satisfaction and identify areas where improvements can be made to foster a more inclusive workplace.

Objective 5: Engaging in Community Outreach and Partnerships

- Collaborate with local organizations and communities to address social issues and contribute positively to the advancement of diversity and inclusivity in society.
- Organize and participate in events and initiatives that celebrate diversity, encouraging dialogue and understanding among members of the wider community.
- Establish a platform for ongoing communication and engagement with community partners, fostering mutually beneficial relationships centered around shared values of equality and inclusivity.



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Objective 6: Measuring and Reporting Progress

- Develop a comprehensive framework to track progress towards diversity and inclusion goals and regularly assess the effectiveness of initiatives.
- Prepare and publish annual reports on diversity and inclusivity metrics, highlighting achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- Utilize feedback from students, faculty, staff, and community members to refine strategies and adapt approaches to continuously improve the university's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusivity.

By diligently pursuing these objectives, CUSAT will stand as an institution committed to excellence in embracing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering an inclusive environment for all its members.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Syndicate (Governing Board) has ultimate accountability for compliance with the University's equality obligations.
2. The Vice Chancellor and statutory officers provide leadership on equality, diversity and inclusivity and are responsible for the implementation of the policy.
3. Equal Opportunities Cell and Internal Complaints Committee will have the mandate of ensuring equality and ethical compliance across the institution
4. All members of the University community have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with both the requirements and the spirit of the policy acknowledging the shared responsibility required to achieve a truly inclusive culture, by:
 - Treating students, staff and visitors to the University with dignity and respect.
 - Not engaging in, colluding in or encouraging behaviour that constitutes unlawful discrimination.
 - Supporting activities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
5. Contractors and service providers working in university premises are expected to act within the terms of this policy