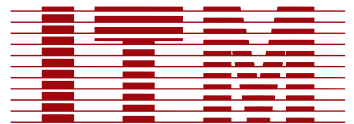




DIFFERENTLY-ABLED (DIVYANGJAN) FRIENDLY POLICY



UNIVERSITY

GWALIOR • MP • INDIA

“CELEBRATING DREAMS”

Message from Vice Chancellor

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff

As Vice Chancellor, it is my honor to share our renewed commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of our community, especially our differently-abled (Divyangjan) students and staff. Our Differently-abled Friendly Policy is designed to ensure that everyone at ITM University has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Our policy encompasses several key initiatives to enhance accessibility and inclusivity across our campus. We are upgrading our physical infrastructure to include ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms, ensuring that all buildings and facilities are navigable for everyone. Classrooms and learning spaces are being equipped with assistive technologies to support diverse learning needs.

We are also enhancing our support services, including personalized academic assistance, counseling, and career development programs tailored to the unique needs of our differently-abled community members. Training sessions for faculty and staff will promote awareness and understanding, fostering a culture of empathy and respect.

At ITM University, we believe that diversity enriches our community and drives innovation. By implementing these measures, we aim to create an environment where every individual can achieve their full potential. Together, let us champion inclusivity and support for our differently-abled community.

Thank you for your dedication and collaboration.

Best regards,

Vice Chancellor

ITM University Gwalior

DIFFERENTLY-ABLED FRIENDLY POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of the ITM University Student Disability Policy is to ensure that the legal rights of students with disabilities are recognized and protected. It establishes the principles and procedures through which students with disabilities are recognized and assisted at ITM UNIVERSITY, outlining support mechanisms and processes to ensure that students with disabilities enjoy the same educational opportunities as their fellow ITM UNIVERSITY students.

This policy reaffirms ITM University's commitment to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act, 2016, Government of India, and fulfils the relevant provisions of the ITM UNIVERSITY Equal Opportunity policy.

ITM UNIVERSITY provides reasonable accommodation to qualified students with disabilities, adopting the definition of reasonable accommodation outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006):

"Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms." (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>)

All members of the University community are responsible for promoting the realization of the principles in this policy.

1. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

ITM UNIVERSITY adopts the following definition of "disability": a person with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others.

2. Types of Disability

1. Physical disability.

- A. Locomotor disability (a person's inability to execute distinctive activities associated with movement of self and objects resulting from affliction of the musculoskeletal or nervous system or both), including—
 - (a) "leprosy cured person" means a person who has been cured of leprosy but is suffering from—
 - (i) loss of sensation in hands or feet as well as loss of sensation and paresis in the eye and eyelid but with no manifest deformity;
 - (ii) manifest deformity and paresis but have sufficient mobility in their hands and feet to enable them to engage in normal economic activity;
 - (iii) extreme physical deformity as well as advanced age which prevents him/her from undertaking any gainful occupation, and the expression "leprosy cured" shall be construed accordingly;
 - (b) "cerebral palsy" means a Group of non-progressive neurological conditions affecting body movements and muscle coordination, caused by damage to one or more

specific areas of the brain, usually occurring before, during, or shortly after birth;

- (c) “dwarfism” means a medical or genetic condition resulting in an adult height of 4 feet 10 inches (147 centimeters) or less;
- (d) “muscular dystrophy” means a group of hereditary genetic muscle diseases that weakens the muscles that move the human body and persons with multiple dystrophy have incorrect and missing information in their genes, which prevents them from making the proteins they need for healthy muscles. It is characterized by progressive skeletal muscle weakness, defects in muscle proteins, and the death of muscle cells and tissue;
- (e) “acid attack victims” means a person disfigured due to violent assaults by throwing acid or a similarly corrosive substance.

B. Visual impairment

- (a) “blindness” means a condition where a person has any of the following conditions, after the best correction—
 - (i) total absence of sight; or
 - (ii) visual acuity less than 3/60 or less than 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with the best possible correction; or
 - (iii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of fewer than 10 degrees.
- (b) “low-vision” means a condition where a person has any of the following conditions, namely:—
 - (i) visual acuity not exceeding 6/18 or less than 20/60 up to 3/60 or up to 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with best possible corrections; or
 - (ii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of fewer than 40 degrees up to 10 degrees.

C. Hearing impairment

- (a) “deaf” means persons having 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears;
 - (b) “hard of hearing” means a person having 60 DB to 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears;
- D. “speech and language disability” means a permanent disability arising out of conditions such as laryngectomy or aphasia affecting one or more components of speech and language due to organic or neurological causes

2. INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

A condition characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem-solving) and in adaptive behavior which covers a range of every day, social, and practical skills, including—

- (a) “specific learning disabilities” means a heterogeneous group of conditions wherein there is a deficit in processing language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself as a difficulty to comprehend, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and developmental aphasia;

- (b) “autism spectrum disorder” means a neuro-developmental condition typically appearing in the first three years of life that significantly affects a person’s ability to communicate, understand relationships, and relate to others, and is frequently associated with unusual or stereotypical rituals or behaviors.

3. MENTAL BEHAVIOR

“Mental illness” means a substantial disorder of thinking, mood, perception, orientation, or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life, but does not include retardation which is a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a person, especially characterized by sub normality of intelligence.

4. DISABILITY CAUSED DUE TO

(a) chronic neurological conditions, such as

- (i) “multiple sclerosis” means an inflammatory, nervous system disease in which the myelin sheaths around the axons of nerve cells of the brain and spinal cord are damaged, leading to demyelination and affecting the ability of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord to communicate with each other;
- (ii) “Parkinson’s disease” means a progressive disease of the nervous system marked by tremors, muscular rigidity, and slow, imprecise movement, chiefly affecting middle-aged and elderly people associated with degeneration of the basal ganglia of the brain and a deficiency of the neurotransmitter dopamine.

(b) Blood disorder

- (i) “hemophilia” means an inheritable disease, usually affecting only males but transmitted by women to their male children, characterized by loss or impairment of the normal clotting ability of blood so that a minor wound would result in fatal bleeding;
- (ii) “thalassemia” means a group of inherited disorders characterized by reduced or absent amounts of hemoglobin.
- (iii) “sickle cell disease” means a hemolytic disorder characterized by chronic anemia, painful events, and various complications due to associated tissue and organ damage; “hemolytic” refers to the destruction of the cell membrane of red blood cells resulting in the release of hemoglobin.

5. MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

(more than one of the above-specified disabilities) including deaf-blindness which means a condition in which a person may have a combination of hearing and visual impairments causing severe communication, developmental, and educational problems.

3. General Policies

- 3.1 The University will inform faculty, staff, and students of their responsibilities under this policy and will maintain structures and processes to coordinate the support of students with disabilities.
- 3.2 The University will strive to ensure that all University buildings and facilities are

accessible for physically disabled persons. New and renovated campus facilities will be designed with this goal.

- 3.3 Students are encouraged to disclose any physical or mental disability so that appropriate support measures can be put in place.
- 3.4 Information will be provided for prospective students and for admitted students before entry giving clear information about how to access support services.
- 3.5 University faculty and staff are responsible for confidentially treating any disclosure of disability and referring students to the Disability Services Officer (we need to consider creating a new position or adding to the responsibility of the existing position for this purpose) in

Student Support Services to determine appropriate sources of support.

- 3.6 Students who meet the University's definition of having a disability are entitled to reasonable accommodation to ensure that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to other students.
- 3.7 Reasonable accommodations do not extend to providing long-term academic or other support to someone who, it can be demonstrated, is not likely to be able to complete their course of study. Such an assertion must be carefully considered and evaluated to ensure full compliance with legal responsibilities under state and central law and the provisions of this policy.
- 3.8 There may be occasions in which a student feels that he or she is unable to study and must take time off due to an illness or disability. It is the responsibility of the student to consult their institute or department and to follow the procedure for requesting a leave of absence as outlined in the university's academic regulations/policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The University will ensure that:

- All members of the University community are aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising under it;
- Structures and processes are developed and maintained to coordinate the support of students with disabilities.
- Appropriate training is provided for staff and faculty who work with students to recognize disability issues and to seek appropriate support services.
- The Student Disability Policy is reviewed and updated regularly.

4.2 Institutes and academic departments will ensure that:

- Reasonable adjustments in teaching and learning are considered for students falling under the definition of disability.
- Students and potential students are given a clear account of the nature and content of a course, the assessment methods, and the required learning outcomes through publications and course-related materials.
- Clear and practical information on how to access support services is given to students during their orientation.

- Internal institute or department procedures do not unlawfully discriminate against students who have disabilities.
- Students with disabilities should be made known to the Disability Services Officer and they work together to coordinate any necessary accommodations.

4.3 Individual staff members are responsible for:

- Treating any disclosure of disability seriously and referring students to appropriate sources of support.
- Helping to create a non-stigmatizing community within the University, where students with disabilities are encouraged to succeed.
- Keeping accurate records of interactions with students which are related to concerns about a student's health.
- Handling written and electronic information which relates to a student's health securely and confidentially.
- Respecting a student's right to confidentiality and verifying that a student has no objections to their disability issues being discussed with others.
- Seeking advice from support services within the University if they are concerned about a student's health.
- Familiarizing themselves with the procedures for helping students with disabilities.
- Following up with students who have agreed to self-refer to sources of support within the University.
- Ensuring that accurate information is given to prospective students regarding the availability of support for students with disabilities in the University
- Familiarizing themselves with the University's responsibilities towards disabled Students

4.4 Individual students and prospective students are responsible for:

- Declaring any pre-existing health conditions before entering the university (for medical and insurance purposes)
- Discussing any necessary support arrangements before commencing the course, whenever possible
- Notifying the University if their health is having a detrimental impact on their ability to fulfill the commitments of the course
- Notifying the University if they feel their exam performance has been affected by disability issues
- Ensuring that they have a clear idea of what will be expected of them in their course of study.

4.5 The Disability Services Officer in Student Services will:

- Offer advice and guidance to University faculty and staff on supporting students with long-term disabilities and work with faculty to provide reasonable adjustments

to the academic environment.

- Carry out assessments of study-related needs for disabled students.
- Work towards improving the provision of support for students with disabilities.
- Provide accessible online information about the services available for ITM UNIVERSITY students with disabilities.

5. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This section describes the types of support and/or accommodations that students may expect the University to provide. Such accommodations do not, however, necessarily extend to providing long-term academic or other support to someone who, it can be demonstrated, is not likely to be able to complete their course of study. In all cases in which the University seeks to rely on the assertion that a student is not likely to complete their course, careful consideration must be given to ensuring full compliance with the provisions of this policy.

5.1 Admissions

The University is committed to admissions practices that do not discriminate against applicants on grounds of disability. The fact that an applicant has a disability will not be disclosed to an institute or department during the application process to ensure that admissions decisions are not illegally influenced by an applicant's disability or health status.

The University is committed to giving admissions to such students as per the reservation policy of the Government of Gujarat from time to time. ITM UNIVERSITY will continue to include its non-discrimination policy in printed and electronic promotional materials. Once an applicant has been accepted by ITM UNIVERSITY for admission, he or she is encouraged to disclose any disability which they or thinks may affect their experience at ITM UNIVERSITY. This is to ensure that any support requirements can be discussed with the accepted student, and when possible, arranged before arrival. The University's Disability Services Officer will work with students and relevant faculty to discuss and organize support with institutes and departments.

5.2 Orientation

As part of the orientation program, information will be provided detailing the University's expectations of students, the non-discrimination policy, the Code of Ethics, the Disability Policy, and the process for requesting disability accommodations.

5.3 Support during the academic year

Some disabilities (in particular psycho-social disabilities) may emerge after the student has already embarked on their ITM UNIVERSITY studies. A decision to seek help for the problems some students may be experiencing is not easy. However, students need to bear in mind that if they do not communicate their problems with the University (Academic and

Examination related also) via their department and the Disability Services Officer, their grades may suffer and they will not be able to rely on reasonable accommodations which may be provided by the University upon request.

6. SOURCES OF SUPPORT

6.1 Disability Services Officer

The Disability Services Officer is a point of contact for any student who would like informal advice and assistance or who would like to request a reasonable disability accommodation during their time at ITM UNIVERSITY. The DSO also serves as a point of contact for faculty and staff who need assistance in supporting a student with a disability issue.

6.2 ITM University Hospital

When experiencing physical or mental health difficulties or issues, students may visit the ITM UNIVERSITY Hospital. Those experiencing mental health conditions may benefit from medication, which the medical staff can prescribe. The ITM UNIVERSITY Hospital has experience with these types of situations, and its network of colleagues includes specialists that can assist in the care of people who require more intensive support or treatment. ITM UNIVERSITY Hospital staff can help to guide students through the university procedures

6.3 ITM University Student Counselling Office

ITM UNIVERSITY's Student Counselling Office provides confidential individual counseling and can make referrals to other psychological and psychiatric practitioners. Students Wellness Programme Counsellor is professionally trained and has experience enabling students to deal with motivation and concentration difficulties, self-confidence problems, anxiety, stress, panic attacks, perfectionism, obsessions/compulsions, depression, relationship concerns, emotional trauma, concerns that may result from racial, cultural, or other identity issues.

7. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS HELPING PEERS WITH DISABILITY ISSUES

Students often find themselves in situations in which they are supporting a fellow student with a disability or even a mental health crisis. This can be a very difficult time for the supporting student, and occasionally, situations arise in which a student's behavior (as a result of mental health difficulties or a mental health crisis) causes distress to other students. In this situation, students are advised to speak to the Disability Services Officer or their department head. Any student needing advice on how to support a friend in crisis can contact the ITM UNIVERSITY Student Counselling Office or the Disability Services Officer in confidence.

8. SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES IN HELPING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If a student discloses a disability to an employee, the member of staff must take this disclosure seriously and can guide the student toward appropriate support services in a timely manner to reduce the potential impact on the student's academic performance

and general well-being. Employees may at times feel that they do not have the knowledge or expertise to deal with a particular situation and that they require advice from colleagues within the University. It is the responsibility of individual employees to recognize situations that lie beyond their job role and to make appropriate referrals to the Disability Services Officer, the Student Counselling Office, or the ITM UNIVERSITY Hospital.

Employees are advised to keep factual and accurate records of any interactions with students where there have been disability or mental health concerns. It is advisable to make a note of what actions were taken in these situations, and be mindful of guidelines on data protection and confidentiality

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any initial disclosure of a disability to a faculty or staff member must be treated with sensitivity. The staff member will discuss the possible sharing of this information for the purpose of assisting the student. It is the responsibility of the Disability Services Officer to ensure that reasonable accommodations are put in place and that relevant institute(s) or department (s) is carrying these out.

10. DISCLOSURE

Students or applicants to the University may be reluctant to disclose a disability as they may fear negative responses such as not being admitted to the University, being stigmatized in class, or receiving lower grades. The University encourages students to disclose any difficulties at an early stage so that the help they may need can be discussed and addressed in a timely and confidential manner.

It is the student's responsibility to inform the head, or a faculty member of their institute or department if they are unable to fulfill the requirements of their course for any reason, whether this is done personally or through a friend or support person.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which there is a need to disclose without a student's permission. For example, it may be necessary if there is reason to believe that a student's mental health poses an immediate danger to themselves or others. In these rare instances, information will have to be disclosed to third parties and outside agencies who are experienced in dealing with such emergencies.

11. PROCESS FOR REQUESTING A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

A student requesting reasonable accommodation from the University should put this request in writing to a department head or coordinator, or the Disability Services Officer. The request should include:

The nature of the disability;

- An assessment from a licensed medical doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist confirming the disability. This document should be in English or include a translation and must be no older than one year from the date on which the request is made.
- An explanation of the accommodation requested. Students may first approach a faculty or staff member in their department or institute to ask for advice on reasonable accommodation. However, even in these cases, a request for reasonable accommodation will have to be registered with the Disability Services Officer. After

receiving a request from a student for reasonable accommodation, the Disability Services The officer, in conjunction with relevant faculty and staff, must communicate the University's response as soon as possible, but not later than ten working days from the date of the request.

12. APPEALS

Should the student be dissatisfied with the decision of the Disability Services Officer, the student may appeal to the Principal/Dean of Faculty. The Principal/Dean of Faculty will adjudicate the case as soon as possible, but no later than one month after receiving the student's appeal request.

13. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There may be occasions when a student feels that he or she is unable to study and needs to take time out due to an illness or disability (particularly cyclical disabilities such as psycho-social disabilities). This could be for a short period, such as a week, or could be for a much longer period, such as a semester. It is the responsibility of the student to consult their institute or department if they wish to take time out, and the student will be required to follow department and university policy regarding a leave of absence.

If students are absent from the University for a prolonged period without explanation or prior arrangement, they may be presumed to have left the University, and their enrolment maybe terminated. In this situation, when a student is known or suspected to be subject to a disability, institutes, and departments are advised to attempt to make contact with the student to clarify the nature of their absence.

13.1 Temporary withdrawal for the reason of disability

There may be extreme circumstances in which students are refusing or are unwilling to seek help or advice for their disability (in particular a psycho-social disability), and University staff feel that the student is unfit to continue his or her program of study. In such situations, when it is judged by an institute or department that a student is suffering from a serious disability or ill health, and either the student has (i) declined to seek medical help and advice or (ii) the effects of the treatment are insufficient to allay the institute or department's concerns, the institute or department may make a request for the Student to be temporarily withdrawn (official status: "leave of absence: personal"). This is done by sending a request in writing to the Disability The service Office will confer with a medical professional as well as the Provost and the department or institute head about whether there are grounds to exclude the student temporarily for reasons of disability. The student will be consulted before a decision is reached except in extreme circumstances in which the student may be unable to participate in this discussion due to his or her psychological condition

A decision about such a withdrawal needs to be made in writing to the student, information about appealing the decision should be made explicit, and a copy of this Disability Policy should be appended. During the period that a student is absent, the Student Services Office will attempt to maintain contact with the student in an appropriate manner.

13.2 Returning to study after a leave of absence

All Students who are temporarily withdrawn for reasons of ill health retain the right of readmission. A student who has been required to temporarily withdraw based on ill health may at any time send a written request to the Dean of Faculty to be readmitted to the University. Upon receiving such a request, the Dean of Faculty will confer with the Provost and the department head to determine the course of action. In deciding, the Dean of Students must consult the institute or department which initiated the process, and the student concerned. It may also request an opinion from a medical practitioner, which it will share with the student. The Dean of Faculty shall inform the student and the head of the relevant institute or department in writing of its decision within two working days and initiate the "change of status" procedure in the cases when a student is allowed to return. If the decision is not to allow the student to return to study, the student can resubmit a request for readmission no earlier than 30 days after the decision. A student who is allowed to return after a withdrawal to continue their studies may discuss reasonable accommodations with the Disability Services Officer, who will work with the relevant institute or department to put in place any appropriate support provisions to enable the student to continue his or her studies.

14. DISCIPLINARY ISSUES

As part of Student Orientation, information is given which sets out the University's expectations of students. These expectations include attendance at teaching sessions and exams (where applicable) and the timely submission of coursework. When students are unable to comply with these expectations, communication must be maintained between the student and the University, and where applicable, longer-term adjustments to the course can be considered in the case of physical or mental health difficulties.

There may be instances in which a student's mental health causes them to behave in a disruptive manner. If staff members who have come into contact with this student believe that a student's mental health may have been a contributory factor in the behavior, or if the student himself/herself discloses this information, careful consideration should be given to the way in which the incident or behavior is treated.

If disciplinary action is considered, the student should be allowed to raise issues around his or her support needs. It may be that this student is not currently receiving any help and that their behavior is beyond their control.