



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



8.2.3 Workplace non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy

Our university is committed to fostering a workplace that is safe, respectful, and free from discrimination or harassment. We uphold equal opportunity practices for all employees and applicants, ensuring fair treatment based on merit and qualifications regardless of gender, gender identity, caste, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic.

This policy applies to all faculty, staff, administration, students, contractors, and visitors engaging with the university. It prohibits any discriminatory acts in hiring, promotion, compensation, workplace behaviour, or access to resources. Mandatory training programs and awareness campaigns are conducted to foster an inclusive culture that respects diversity and promotes equity.

Complaints of discrimination or harassment can be reported confidentially through multiple channels, including an online portal, Human Resources, Student Affairs, and designated grievance committees. All complaints are investigated impartially, with protections against retaliation. Disciplinary actions for violations range from counselling and training to suspension or termination, depending on severity.

Our institution also maintains an Internal Complaints Committee to address gender-related concerns and sexual harassment proactively. The ICC organizes workshops and sensitisation sessions to nurture a harmonious campus where talent and capabilities are recognised without bias. Through these robust measures, the university ensures every employee and student has an environment where dignity, equal opportunity, and fairness prevail, contributing to a healthy and productive academic community.



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POLICY ON WORKPLACE NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
POLICY

University Context:
 St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education & Research (SPIHER), located in Avak, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, is a deemed-to-be university under Section 3 of the UGC Act. It offers a wide range of programmes in engineering, architecture, management, science, arts, and humanities, bringing together a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff.

Policy Framework and Scope:
 SPIHER's Workplace Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy applies to all employees and job applicants across academics, administrative, and support roles. The policy covers recruitment, promotion, training opportunities, compensation, work allocation, and all other employment conditions, ensuring that decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and institutional needs rather than personal characteristics.

Protected Characteristics:
 The policy affirms that no employee or applicant shall face discrimination, harassment, or unequal treatment on the basis of gender, gender identity or expression, religion, caste, race, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic as recognized by law and institutional norms. It also promotes reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities and those with specific personal or family circumstances, wherever operationally feasible.

Implementation and Grievance Redressal:
 SPIHER supports this policy through fair recruitment procedures, awareness and sensitization programmes, and clear channels for reporting concerns related to discrimination or harassment. Complaints can be raised through designated grievance committees or HR, and are handled confidentially, impartially, and without retaliation, reaffirming SPIHER's commitment to a safe, inclusive, and equitable workplace for all employees.

Benchmarking Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity: While there is no direct external benchmark like a "living wage" for this policy area, assessing effectiveness involves looking at social and economic indicators. Local stakeholders, including Chennai, mitigate ongoing challenges related to social inequalities, caste discrimination, gender biases, and unequal access to employment opportunities.

Legal and Social Framework: The state and central government have enacted various laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting workplace discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, disability, and other factors. However, practical enforcement and cultural change in university policies must be taken to foster genuine inclusion.

SPIHER's Policy Commitment: SPIHER's Workplace Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy strives to eliminate the systemic barriers found in the local context by clearly prohibiting discrimination, providing grievance redressal, and promoting fair recruitment and career progression. The policy strives to support equal access and dignity for all employees, reflecting both legal requirements and higher institutional expectations.

Enablers and Considerations:

- Deep-rooted social norms and biases in Chennai/Tamil Nadu require continuous education and awareness beyond formal policies.
- Reporting discrimination may be hindered by fear of retaliation or social repercussions, especially among marginalized groups.
- Intersectionality is important—overlapping identities such as gender and caste may compound discrimination risks.
- Periodic monitoring, data collection, and worker feedback are essential to assess policy impact in a complex social environment.

In summary, while no single number benchmarks workplace non-discrimination, SPIHER's policy addresses the nuanced social realities of Chennai and Tamil Nadu by promoting a fair, respectful, and legally compliant workplace environment. Success depends on ongoing commitment beyond policy alone, including culture change and practical support mechanisms.

01.02.2024



REGISTRAR



Registrar
 St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education and Research
 Avak, Chennai - 600 054, Tamil Nadu.



Policy on Workplace Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity
Policy

Policy Created on:	01/07/2020	Approved by:
Revised on:	01/02/2024	REG/HR/AM

Directly supported SDGs:

- SDG 5 Gender Equality
- SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Indirectly supported SDGs:

- SDG 1 No Poverty
- SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

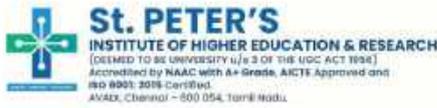


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Policy on Workplace Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity created in 2020 and revised on 01.02.2024, reaffirming SPIHER's commitment to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and equitable campus environment.



SPIHER’s Policy on Workplace Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity affirms the commitment to an inclusive and equitable environment where every employee and student is treated with fairness and respect. The policy prohibits any discrimination based on gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics, ensuring equal opportunity in recruitment, promotion, training, and access to resources.

Various confidential reporting mechanisms exist to address grievances related to discrimination or harassment, including online portals, grievance committees, and Human Resources channels. Complaints undergo impartial and confidential investigation, and protections against retaliation are strictly enforced. Appropriate disciplinary actions are taken based on the severity of any violations.

SPIHER’s Internal Complaints Committee plays an active role in preventing sexual harassment and advancing gender sensitivity through ongoing education and awareness programs. Mandatory staff training and awareness initiatives further support cultural transformation toward diversity and inclusion.

By embedding these practices, SPIHER strives to create a workplace environment where merit and fairness prevail, ensuring dignity, equal opportunity, and respect for all members of the university community.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Introduction:
The Institute is committed to providing **equity, inclusivity, diversity**, and ensuring the maximum for all members of its community. The policy articulates the Institute's commitment to provide an inclusive environment where no individual is disadvantaged or discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, or gender. The Institute values diversity as a strength that enriches learning, teaching, research, and campus life. The Institute strives to ensure that every individual has an equal opportunity to participate, contribute, and benefit from all aspects of Institute life.

SCOPE:
This policy applies to:

- All Current and Prospective Students
- All Academic, Administrative, and Support Staff
- All Visitors, Contractors, and Volunteers
- All Employees (on, sponsored or off-campus)
- All aspects of the Institute including admissions, employment, teaching and learning, research, campus activities, housing, and participation in student life.

Objectives of the Policy

- To prohibit discrimination, harassment, or victimization on the grounds of ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, or gender.
- To ensure equal access to education, employment, facilities, and services to all members of the University community.
- To provide reasonable accommodations and support to individuals with disabilities or specific needs.

4. To respect and accommodate religious and cultural practices, provided these are consistent with the principles of equality, safety, and academic integrity.

5. To recognize gender diversity and ensure all supporting staff fulfill their rights to express their gender identity freely.

6. To protect individuals' right to equality of participation or citizenship status, within the limits of applicable law.

7. To promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, civility, and dignity in all interactions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

President, Vice-Chancellor, and Senior Academic Officers:
Provide oversight and ensure that all staff comply with equality obligations.

Vice-Chancellor / President:
Ensure leadership commitment, accountability and resource allocation for effective implementation.

Deans and Directors:
Promote and ensure adherence to this policy in their respective areas.

All Staff and Students:
Foster culture with respect and dignity, and actively contribute to maintaining an inclusive environment.

Implementation of the Policy
The Institute provides technical and systematic programs on equality, inclusion, and diversity, one-time and ongoing awareness, facilities and learning materials for individual with disabilities. The Institute incorporates inclusive design in communication, curriculum, and events and ensures recruitment, admission, and participation data to identify and address inequalities if any. The Institute ensures to support all groups/diversities through designed spaces and reasonable accommodations where necessary. **Harassment Reporting** is supported through inclusive language, policies, and facilities. The Institute regularly reviews policies, procedures, and data to assess compliance and effectiveness. An annual report will be submitted to the Institute website highlighting progress and areas for improvement. This policy will be formally reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislative or institutional changes occur.

REPORTING, COMPLAINTS, AND RESOLUTION

Any individual who believes they have experienced discrimination or harassment based on ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, or gender may submit a formal complaint through the University's Complaints or Grievance Procedures. All reports will be handled with sensitivity, fairness, and confidentiality. The Institute will take prompt and appropriate action in response to any substantiated complaint.

Equality and Non-Discrimination among the Faculty members (teaching and non-teaching) and mainly focused for the students to maintain dignity, equal opportunity and fairness measures

Conclusion

At SPIHER, the commitment to workplace non-discrimination and equal opportunity is reflected not only in formal policy but also in active practice. Staff, faculty, and students share stories of how an inclusive, respectful environment has fostered their sense of belonging, dignity, and professional growth. These personal narratives highlight the transformative power of fair and equitable treatment in strengthening community bonds and promoting diversity.

During institutional events, testimonials from diverse members recognize how SPIHER's non-discrimination initiatives have created opportunities for marginalized groups, promoted gender equity, and supported individuals facing challenges due to caste, disability, or other factors. Their voices affirm that true progress involves valuing every person's unique contribution, making the campus a safer and more welcoming place for all.

Such shared experiences at university gatherings embody how inclusion and equality are central not only to academic success but also to the holistic development and well-being of the entire SPIHER community. This ongoing commitment underscores that advancing equity enriches the university's culture and drives institutional excellence.