

# **KARUNYA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCES**

**Lifelong Learning Access Policy**

**KITS/LLAP/2025/01**



## Lifelong Learning Access Policy

### PREAMBLE

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences (KITS) recognizes learning as a lifelong endeavour. In line with its Vision and Mission, the Institute is committed to ensure that learners across all segments of society have access to lifelong learning opportunities.

The Institute provides inclusive, equitable and quality-driven lifelong learning programs through academic, professional and community initiatives. This includes digital platforms, short-term courses and continuing professional development programs designed to strengthen employability, research and innovation.

### RATIONALE

The rapid pace of technological advancement, evolving workforce requirements and global demand for knowledge-based economies have transformed learning into a continuous necessity rather than a finite stage of life. Higher education institutions worldwide are increasingly called upon to extend their role beyond formal degree programs to provide flexible, inclusive, and skill-oriented lifelong learning opportunities.

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences (KITS), as a centre of academic excellence, recognizes this responsibility. The policy on lifelong learning is framed in response to:

- **National and International Mandates:** Compliance with guidelines from UGC, AICTE, and global frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) on quality education.
- **Societal Needs:** Addressing the learning requirements of diverse groups including students, faculty, alumni, industry professionals, and community participants.
- **Employability and Innovation:** Preparing learners to adapt to dynamic career landscapes, advance research competencies and contribute to entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystems.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Bridging educational gaps by providing accessible, affordable, and culturally sensitive lifelong learning opportunities to marginalized and underrepresented groups.

This rationale ensures that the policy is not only aspirational but also grounded in contextual relevance, thereby reinforcing KITS's commitment to inclusive growth and sustainable development.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy sets out the conditions under which access to lifelong learning opportunities is provided at Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences (KITS). It affirms the Institute's commitment to inclusive, equitable and continuous learning for students, alumni, faculty and community participants.

The salient features of this policy are summarized as follows:

1. These policy statements are framed in alignment with UGC Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education, AICTE CPD (Continuous Professional Development Framework) and ISO 21001:2018, and support the UN SDG 4 (Quality Education).
2. The primary purpose of lifelong learning is to provide continuous educational, professional, and community development opportunities.
3. All learners, including students, alumni, faculty members and community members are eligible to access lifelong learning programs.
4. The Institute shall provide flexible learning modes, including digital platforms, online/blended learning and short-term courses.
5. Non-discrimination and inclusivity shall be maintained, ensuring equal access regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity or socio-economic background.
6. Lifelong learning activities shall respect cultural diversity and religious observances, promoting gender equality and fairness in participation.
7. Programs shall be designed to enhance employability, research, innovation and industry relevance, thereby strengthening societal impact.
8. The Institute shall engage in collaborations with industries, academic bodies and global institutions to expand lifelong learning opportunities.
9. Monitoring and evaluation of all programs shall be carried out by IQAC through audits, stakeholder feedback and benchmarking against international best practices and standards.
10. A transparent grievance redressal mechanism shall be available in line with UGC (2023) regulations to resolve learner concerns promptly and fairly.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Promote equity and inclusivity in learning opportunities for all stakeholders.
2. Ensure compliance with national and international standards (UGC, AICTE, ISO).
3. Integrate lifelong learning into teaching, research and outreach.
4. Reinforce KITS's vision of Transforming Lives through Education, Research, and Service to Society.
5. Align lifelong learning programs with global benchmarks to improve institutional performance, ranking, and societal impact.

This policy applies to:

1. All students, faculty, alumni and community participants of KITS.
2. All lifelong learning programmes conducted on-campus, off-campus and online.

3. Use of any personal devices or equipment connected to KITS's lifelong learning platforms shall also be governed by this policy.

## DOCUMENT CONTROL & REVISION HISTORY

| Policy Title            | Lifelong Learning Access Policy  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Reference Number        | KITS/LLAP/2025/01  |
| Version                 | 1.0  |
| Issue                   | 02   |
| Policy Created on       | July 2022  |
| Revision History        | Revised on 29 <sup>th</sup> August 2025 (28 <sup>th</sup> IQAC Meeting).   |
| Responsible Executives  | Vice-Chancellor and Director (Quality Assurance & Accreditation)   |
| Responsible Office      | Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)   |
| Policy Review Frequency | Policy shall be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required by UGC, AICTE, ISO or other regulatory authorities. |

**The policy is described in the following articles**

### ARTICLE 1

#### STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences is committed in:

1. Providing opportunities to lifelong learning.
2. Providing affordable and flexible modes of education, including online, blended, and offline learning.
3. Enhancing employability and innovation by embedding lifelong learning in Institutional culture.
4. Aligning with UGC Guidelines, AICTE CPD Framework and ISO standards.
5. Supporting UN SDG 4 (Quality Education) by extending lifelong learning beyond campus.

### ARTICLE 2

#### POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to:

- Promote equity and inclusivity by ensuring that learning opportunities are accessible to all, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic status.
- Strengthen the professional and personal development of students, alumni, faculty, and community stakeholders.
- Ensure compliance with national and international educational standards (UGC, AICTE, ISO).
- Institutionalize continuous quality improvement in teaching, research and outreach through structured lifelong learning practices.

- Reinforce KITS's vision of Transforming Lives through Education, Research, and Service to Society.
- Foster excellence through benchmarking with global standards to improve institutional performance indicators, impact metrics and overall societal contribution.

## **ARTICLE 3**

### **POLICY PRINCIPLES**

The Institute ensures to implement the following principles for effective promotion of lifelong learning:

#### **3.1 Non-Discrimination**

KITS strictly prohibits any form of discrimination against individuals based on ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender or any other protected characteristic. All lifelong learning activities and programs shall be designed and implemented to guarantee equal opportunities for participation. The Institute is dedicated to cultivating a culture of fairness and inclusivity, ensuring respect for all learners and safeguarding their personal and professional growth without bias.

#### **3.2 Accessibility & Accommodations**

KITS is committed in providing barrier-free and accessible lifelong learning opportunities to individuals with diverse needs, including those with disabilities. The Institute proactively design its infrastructure, digital platforms, resources and course materials to accommodate all learners. Reasonable accommodations shall be made to ensure equitable participation, allowing every learner to benefit fully from the programs offered. This commitment ensures that accessibility is a core principle of KITS's lifelong learning initiatives.

#### **3.3 Culturally Inclusive Programming**

KITS acknowledges cultural diversity as a vital strength in the learning process. Lifelong learning programs shall be designed to respect, celebrate and integrate cultural differences, promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation among participants. The Institute shall take into account cultural sensitivities in the planning, content, and delivery of programs, thereby ensuring that all learners feel represented, included and valued.

#### **3.4 Religious Considerations**

In recognition of the diverse religious practices of its participants, KITS shall design and schedule lifelong learning programs in a manner that minimizes conflicts with major religious observances. By respecting participants' beliefs and practices, the Institute seeks to uphold fairness and inclusivity, ensuring that all learners can engage meaningfully without compromising their spiritual commitments.

#### **3.5 Gender Equality**

KITS is committed to promote gender equality in lifelong learning. All programs shall be designed to ensure equitable access for learners of all genders. The Institute shall actively

encourage participation by women and other underrepresented gender groups in professional development and continuing education initiatives. This principle reflects KITS's vision of creating a balanced and inclusive learning ecosystem.

### **3.6 Immigration Neutrality**

KITS ensures that lifelong learning opportunities are open to all individuals regardless of their immigration or residency status. No learner shall be excluded from participation on the basis of nationality or citizenship. This principle reflects KITS's commitment to inclusivity, global engagement and the democratization of education beyond geographical boundaries.

### **3.7 Outreach & Communication**

KITS shall disseminate information on lifelong learning opportunities through diverse communication channels, ensuring transparency and inclusivity. Awareness campaigns, digital platforms and public announcements shall be employed to maximize participation. Clear, timely and accessible communication ensures opportunities reach all segments of society, including underserved and marginalized communities.

### **3.8 Grievance Redressal**

KITS is committed to uphold transparent and fair grievance redressal mechanisms in compliance with the UGC Grievance Redressal Regulations. Participants in lifelong learning programs can report issues or complaints through designated channels and such grievances shall be addressed promptly and fairly. This mechanism strengthens accountability and trust between the Institute and its stakeholders.

### **3.9 Collaboration**

KITS actively seeks to collaborate with industries, academic institutions and global organizations to enhance lifelong learning opportunities. Such partnerships shall enable the development of joint programs, knowledge exchange and skill-based training that align academic learning with real-world applications. Collaboration shall help expand the scope, relevance, and impact of lifelong learning at KITS.

### **3.10 Research & Innovation Support**

KITS encourages research, innovation, and professional development initiatives aligned with lifelong learning objectives. The Institute shall support learners and faculty in undertaking projects that create new knowledge, technologies and practices relevant to continuous learning. This principle fosters an environment of creativity and discovery that contributes to institutional growth and societal advancement.

### **3.11 Quality & Impact Enhancement**

KITS is committed to the continuous improvement of teaching, research, and outreach activities by monitoring performance indicators such as research output, teaching effectiveness, and community engagement. Evidence-based strategies and benchmarking with global standards shall be employed to enhance the Institute's overall impact, visibility, and contribution to society.

### **3.12 Industry & Community Integration**

KITS shall strengthen the connection between academia and real-world practice by integrating industry and community into its lifelong learning programs. Internships, workshops, extension activities and outreach initiatives shall be enhanced to prepare learners with skills and experiences relevant to contemporary societal and industrial needs. This integration ensures that learning remains practical, impactful and responsive to global challenges.

## **ARTICLE 4**

### **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

To ensure the effective implementation of this Lifelong Learning Policy, the following responsibilities are assigned:

#### **1. Vice-Chancellor / Pro Vice-Chancellor**

- Provides overall leadership and ensures institutional compliance with the Lifelong Learning Access Policy.
- Reviews and approves strategic initiatives, collaborations, and high-level reports on lifelong learning programs.

#### **2. Registrar**

- Ensures formal adoption, notification, and institutional compliance of the policy.
- Maintains approved versions under document control and coordinates appeals.

#### **3. IQAC (Internal Quality Assurance Cell)**

- Monitors quality benchmarks for lifelong learning programs and collects stakeholder feedback.
- Prepares annual compliance reports and recommends corrective actions for continuous improvement.

#### **4. Heads of Divisions (HoDs)**

- Identify lifelong learning opportunities in respective disciplines and facilitate program approval.
- Ensure inclusivity, accessibility, and industry relevance in program design and delivery.

#### **5. Faculty / Mentors**

- Design and deliver content in alignment with policy principles and ensure accessibility.
- Track learner progress and provide mentoring support to enhance engagement.

#### **6. Grievance Redressal Committee**

- Addresses complaints related to discrimination, accessibility, or fairness in a timely manner.
- Facilitates the appeals process and documents corrective actions for accountability.

#### **7. Learners**

- Engage actively in programs with integrity and responsibility.
- Provide constructive feedback and adhere to institutional values of equity, respect, and inclusivity.

## **ARTICLE 5**

### **MONITORING & EVALUATION**

#### **5.1 Identification of Deficiencies**

Deficiencies in processes, compliance or program outcomes may be identified through learner feedback, stakeholder inputs, internal IQAC audits or external accreditation reviews. Early identification ensures that corrective measures can be taken promptly to maintain the quality, credibility, and effectiveness of lifelong learning initiatives.

#### **5.2 Reporting Mechanism**

All identified issues must be formally reported to the Director (QAA) as the primary authority, or to the Registrar as the secondary contact, within five working days of identification. Reports must include a clear description of the issue, its potential implications and any immediate actions taken. Transparent reporting fosters accountability and supports structured decision-making.

#### **5.3 Action Taken (Corrective Measures)**

The IQAC shall classify reported issues as minor, major or critical based on their severity and impact on institutional performance and compliance. Corrective measures shall be assigned to responsible Divisions with specific timelines for completion. Progress shall be tracked continuously to ensure effective and timely resolution, preventing recurrence of similar issues.

#### **5.4 Outcomes and Documentation**

The results of corrective actions, whether successful resolutions or ongoing challenges, shall be documented and communicated to stakeholders. Verification of corrective outcomes shall be conducted in subsequent reviews. If persistent deficiencies remain unresolved, they shall be escalated to the Vice-Chancellor for higher-level intervention. This ensures Institutional transparency and continuous accountability.

#### **5.5 Review & Continuous Improvement**

The Monitoring & Evaluation policy shall be reviewed every three years or earlier if mandated by UGC, AICTE, ISO or other regulatory bodies. Updates shall follow the PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act) cycle to ensure systematic and sustainable improvement. Global benchmarking and key performance indicators shall inform revisions, ensuring that KITS remains aligned with international best practices and educational excellence.

## **ARTICLE 5A**

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

- **Right to Appeal** – If a learner, faculty, or stakeholder is not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Redressal Committee, they may submit a written appeal to the Registrar within 10 working days of receiving the resolution.
- **Resolution Timeline** – The Registrar will review the appeal and provide a written response within 15 working days.

- **Documentation** – All appeals, proceedings, and resolutions will be formally recorded and maintained under institutional records.
- **Non-Retaliation** – No individual shall face retaliation, bias, or disadvantage for exercising the right to appeal.

## ARTICLE 6

### VIOLATIONS

Any violation of this policy, whether by students, faculty, alumni, or community participants, shall be subject to review by the Institute's disciplinary mechanisms. Depending on the severity of the violation, actions may range from corrective guidance and written warnings to suspension of programme participation or referral to statutory committees. Persistent or severe violations shall be reported to the appropriate regulatory authorities. This provision ensures accountability, compliance and adherence to the values of inclusivity, accessibility, and quality.

### References

- 1) ISO 21001:2018 – Educational Organizations Management Systems.
- 2) ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management Systems.
- 3) AICTE Approval Process Handbook.
- 4) UGC Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education (2025).
- 5) UN SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following terms are defined to ensure clarity and consistency in interpretation:

- 1) Lifelong Learning: The continuous, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge, skills, and competencies for personal, civic, social, and employment-related reasons.
- 2) Learner: Any student, faculty member, staff, alumni, or community participant engaged in a learning program offered by the Institute.
- 3) Learning Program: Any structured educational initiative including degree programs, certificate courses, workshops, seminars, online modules, or blended formats.
- 4) Deficiency: A gap identified in program delivery, accessibility, inclusivity, or learner satisfaction through feedback or audits.
- 5) Grievance: A formal complaint raised by a learner, faculty, or stakeholder regarding issues of accessibility, fairness, delivery, or violation of policy provisions.