KARUNYA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCES

Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

KITS/ADAH/2025/01

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PREAMBLE

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences (KITS) upholds the constitutional vision of equality, dignity and inclusivity in higher education. The Institute recognizes that equity and respect for diversity are essential to achieve the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and to advance India's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

This policy establishes KITS's framework for maintaining an academic ecosystem free from discrimination and harassment, ensuring that every student can thrive in an atmosphere of safety, respect and academic integrity.

The policy is developed in alignment with:

- The Constitution of India (Articles 14, 15, 16, and 21) guaranteeing equality before law and protection against discrimination.
- UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012 and UGC (Prevention of Caste-Based Discrimination) Regulations, 2012.
- AICTE Policy on Gender Sensitization, 2022, and AICTE Approval Process Handbook.
- NEP 2020 – Sections on Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education.
- National Commission for Women (NCW) and Ministry of Education (MoE) guidelines on women's safety in campuses.
- NAAC Criterion 7 – Institutional Values & Best Practices and NBA Graduate Attributes emphasizing ethics and social responsibility.
- ABET Accreditation Criteria (Student Outcomes 4 & 5) – Ethics, teamwork, and societal responsibility.
- QS and THE Impact Rankings frameworks recognizing institutional inclusivity and equality practices.

RATIONALE

The higher education sector must actively combat inequality and create equitable access to learning. Any instance of discrimination or harassment damages institutional credibility, breaches fundamental rights, and disrupts the development of a safe, inclusive learning environment.

Therefore, KITS adopts this policy to:

- Fulfil its obligations under national laws and international education standards.
- Ensure compliance with UGC, AICTE, NAAC and NBA equity mandates.
- Integrate ABET and global ranking benchmarks that measure institutional inclusivity.
- Promote gender-sensitive, accessible and equitable learning spaces.
- Foster ethical leadership and accountability among students and staff.
- Strengthen the institute's standing in QS, THE Impact Rankings and UI Green Metric categories related to equality and well-being.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy articulates the institute's commitment to a discrimination-free, inclusive and equitable academic environment for all students.

Salient Features:

1. **Alignment with National and Global Standards:** Compliant with NEP 2020, UGC, AICTE, NBA, NAAC, ABET and international ranking frameworks.
2. **Zero-Tolerance Policy:** Absolute prohibition of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
3. **Gender and Social Equity:** Integration of gender sensitization, accessibility, and social inclusion into academic and campus practices.
4. **Structured Redressal Mechanism:** Confidential, multi-level reporting and investigation procedures aligned with UGC Grievance Redressal Regulations, 2023.
5. **Counselling and Support Systems:** Student welfare, psychological counselling and mediation services coordinated by the Student Affairs Office.
6. **Compliance Audits:** Regular IQAC-led monitoring and inclusion audits for NAAC/NBA documentation.
7. **Transparency and Reporting:** Annual Diversity & Inclusion Report shared publicly and benchmarked with THE Impact and QS Equality Indicators.
8. **Integration with Curriculum:** Incorporation of ethics, gender and inclusion modules into academic programs (as per NEP 2020).
9. **Stakeholder Training:** Mandatory sensitization for faculty, staff and students, supported by AICTE's Gender Equity Program.
10. **Periodic Review:** Triannual review cycle by IQAC or earlier as per statutory amendments.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose:

1. To establish a fair, transparent and accountable mechanism to prevent and address discrimination and harassment.
2. To foster equity, diversity and inclusion as core institutional values.
3. To promote gender sensitivity and disability inclusion aligned with NEP 2020.
4. To integrate these principles into quality assurance and accreditation documentation.
5. To uphold constitutional values of equality, justice, and fraternity in all institutional processes as envisioned in NEP 2020 and the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.

Scope:

This Policy applies to all students of KITS, including those on exchange programs, internships, or digital platforms and includes conduct:

- On-campus, off-campus and online environments.
- During academic, research, extension or extracurricular activities.
- In all interactions involving peers, faculty and staff.

DOCUMENT CONTROL & REVISION HISTORY

Policy Title	Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
Reference Number	KITS/ADAH/2025/01
Version	1.0
Issue	02
Policy Created on	July 2022
Revision History	Revised on 29th August 2025 (28th 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 or other regulatory authorities.

The policy is described in the following articles

ARTICLE 1

STATEMENT OF POLICY

KITS enforces a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of discrimination and harassment. Every student has the right to be treated with respect, free from intimidation, retaliation or exclusion.

The Institute affirms:

- Equal opportunity in admission, participation, and assessment.
- Strict prohibition of discrimination on grounds of caste, religion, race, gender, disability, nationality or socioeconomic background.
- Prohibition of verbal, physical, sexual or digital harassment.
- Confidential handling of all complaints.
- Alignment with ABET Student Outcome 4: *Recognizing ethical and professional responsibilities in global and societal contexts.*

These protections extend to all individuals irrespective of any protected characteristic as defined in this policy.

ARTICLE 2

POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to:

- Promote equality and inclusivity within all student-related processes.
- Implement effective systems to prevent, detect and address discrimination.
- Encourage gender sensitization and respect for diversity.
- Support mental health and social integration programs.
- Embed social responsibility and ethics into curriculum outcomes (NAAC/ NBA/ ABET)
- Align institutional practices with SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 10 and SDG 16.
- Improve KITS's standing in international sustainability and equity rankings.

ARTICLE 3

POLICY PRINCIPLES

3.1 **Equity and Access:** Equal treatment and opportunity for every learner.
3.2 **Zero Discrimination:** No tolerance for bias or prejudice in any form.
3.3 **Confidentiality:** Information shared in investigations is safeguarded.
3.4 **Non-Retaliation:** No adverse action against whistle-blowers or witnesses
3.5 **Transparency:** Due process and fair investigation procedures.
3.6 **Global and Local Alignment:** Conformance with Indian law and international educational standards.
3.7 **Student-Centric Approach:** Protection of well-being and academic rights.

ARTICLE 4

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure effective implementation of the Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy for Students, the following roles and responsibilities are established:

- **Vice-Chancellor**
  - Provides overall leadership and policy oversight for implementation.
  - Ensures institutional compliance with UGC, AICTE, ABET, and other statutory frameworks.
  - Reviews annual inclusion and compliance reports and authorizes necessary policy updates.
- **Registrar**
  - Serves as the institutional authority for receiving and registering complaints.
  - Appoints investigators and oversees the investigation process.
  - Maintains all records and documentation securely in compliance with audit and regulatory requirements.
- **Deputy Registrar (Student Affairs)**
  - Coordinates awareness, mediation and counselling programs for students.
  - Organizes sensitization workshops and student engagement activities.
  - Ensures continuous communication and psychological support for affected individuals through Karunya Wellness Centre.

- **Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)**
    - Integrates this policy into NAAC, NBA and ABET quality documentation frameworks.
    - Prepares the Annual Diversity and Inclusion Report for submission to the Vice-Chancellor.
    - Maintains data for institutional rankings such as QS, THE Impact Rankings and UI Green Metric.
- **Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC)**
    - Conducts impartial investigations and hearings of reported complaints.
    - Reviews evidence and prepares comprehensive findings.
    - Recommends corrective or disciplinary measures to the Registrar and Vice-Chancellor.
- **Heads of Divisions (HoDs)**
    - Implement sensitization and inclusion activities within their Divisions.
    - Promote classroom and academic environments that uphold equality and respect.
    - Monitor adherence to institutional codes of conduct related to equity and diversity.
- **Faculty Members and Mentors**
    - Promote ethical conduct and inclusivity through classroom engagement and mentoring.
    - Encourage timely reporting of concerns or grievances.
    - Serve as role models for respectful, inclusive behaviour within the academic community.
- **Students**
    - Abide by institutional values of equality, dignity, and respect.
    - Participate actively in sensitization and inclusion programs organized by the Institute.
    - Report any incidents of discrimination or harassment responsibly through prescribed channels.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Implementation Framework

- The implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives at KITS shall be carried out under the supervision of the competent authority comprising the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, and Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC).

- The Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) shall function as the nodal body for advising, coordinating, and implementing policies, programmes, training, and awareness initiatives related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights across the campus.

- The EOC shall work in coordination with the Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC), Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), and Student Affairs Office to ensure effective policy execution, stakeholder engagement, and institutional compliance with national and international frameworks.

ARTICLE 5

MONITORING & EVALUATION

5.1 Reporting:

Complaints may be filed verbally, in writing or via the institutional online portal to the Registrar or Deputy Registrar (Student Affairs).

5.2 Investigation Process:

- Preliminary review within 10 working days.
- Formal investigation conducted by the GRC with impartial members.
- Findings reviewed by the Registrar and submitted to the Vice-Chancellor.

5.3 Corrective Measures:

Depending on severity - counselling, warning, suspension, expulsion or legal escalation. Corrective measures shall be applied in accordance with Article 7 (Violations).

5.4 Data Management:

Confidential records maintained in compliance with UGC recordkeeping norms and IQAC audit requirements. Data shall be handled in accordance with applicable data protection and privacy regulations.

5.5 Institutional Benchmarking:

Annual review aligned with QS, THE Impact Rankings, and UI Green Metric inclusion metrics.

ARTICLE 6

APPEALS PROCESS

- **Right to Appeal:** A complainant or respondent may appeal to the Vice-Chancellor within 10 working days.
- **Resolution Timeline:** The appeal shall be resolved within 15 working days.
- **Documentation:** All appeals are recorded under IQAC-controlled quality records.
- **Final Authority:** The Vice-Chancellor's decision is final.

ARTICLE 7

VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy shall be taken seriously and addressed proportionately:

1. **Students:** Subject to disciplinary actions — warnings, suspension or expulsion.
2. **Faculty/Staff Involvement:** Forwarded to the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) or Disciplinary Board.

3. **External Stakeholders:** Violations by vendors/contractors result in termination and blacklisting.
4. **Repeat or Severe Violations:** Reported to statutory bodies such as UGC, AICTE, or MoE.
5. **Non-Retaliation Enforcement:** Any act of reprisal shall itself constitute a policy violation.

ARTICLE 8

POLICY REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy shall be reviewed every three years or earlier, based on regulatory updates from UGC, AICTE, NAAC, NBA, ABET, or the Ministry of Education.

The review process shall be coordinated by the IQAC, incorporating recommendations from:

- Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC)
- Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)
- Student Affairs Office
- Accreditation and Audit Feedback (UGC, NAAC, NBA, ABET)

Updated versions shall be approved by the Vice-Chancellor and disseminated through official institutional communication channels.

References

1. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 – Chapters on Inclusion and Gender Sensitization
2. University Grants Commission (UGC) Equity and Caste-Based Discrimination Regulations (2012, 2023)
3. AICTE Gender Sensitization Guidelines (2022)
4. NAAC Manual – Criterion 7: Institutional Values & Best Practices
5. NBA Accreditation Manual – Graduate Attributes on Ethics and Equity
6. ABET Criterion 3 (Student Outcomes 4 & 5)
7. Ministry of Education (MoE) Guidelines on Safe Campuses (2021)
8. National Commission for Women (NCW) Safety Framework (2020)
9. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
10. UN SDGs 4, 5, 10, and 16
11. QS and THE Impact Rankings Methodology (Equality Indicators)
12. UI GreenMetric Ranking – Social & Equity Impact Indicators
13. UGC (Grievance Redressal for Students) Regulations, 2023

Definitions

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

1. Discrimination: Unfair treatment based on legally protected characteristics.
2. Harassment: Unwelcome conduct that affects dignity or creates a hostile environment.

3. Complainant: The individual filing the report.
4. Respondent: The individual accused of misconduct.
5. Retaliation: Any act of reprisal for reporting or participating in an investigation.
6. Inclusion: Equal access, opportunity, and respect for diversity.
7. Protected Characteristics: Race, caste, religion or belief, gender, gender identity and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, age, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, and refugee or asylum status.

ANNEXURE I – POLICY ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

KITS Policy Action	Corresponding National / International Framework	Institutional Commitment and Implementation
Zero-Tolerance against Discrimination and Harassment	Constitution of India (Articles 14–16), UGC Equity Regulations (2012), AICTE Gender Sensitization Policy (2022)	Strict prohibition of any form of discrimination or harassment; periodic awareness programs and policy enforcement.
Promotion of Equity and Inclusivity in Higher Education	NEP 2020 (Ch. 6.7 – Inclusion and Equal Opportunity), MoE's Gender Inclusion Fund	Integration of equity modules in curriculum; scholarships and mentoring support for underrepresented groups.
Gender Sensitization and Safety on Campus	National Commission for Women (NCW) Campus Safety Guidelines, UGC Saksham Framework (2021)	Implementation of awareness campaigns, ICC and GRC training and safe campus design audits.
Protection for Differently-Abled Students	Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016; UGC Accessibility Guidelines (2023)	Barrier-free infrastructure, assistive technologies, and inclusive examination support.
Ethical & Social Responsibility in Curriculum	NBA Graduate Attribute 8; ABET Student Outcome 4 (Ethics & Society)	Integration of ethics and equity topics in UG/PG curricula; inclusion in course outcomes.
Monitoring & Reporting	NAAC Criterion 7; UGC Grievance Redressal Regulations, 2023	IQAC-led annual audit; publication of Diversity and Inclusion Report.
Alignment with Global Rankings	QS and THE Impact Rankings (Equality Indicators); UI GreenMetric (Social Impact Indicators)	Institutional reporting on gender ratio, inclusion programs and anti-discrimination initiatives.
Commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goals	UN SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Justice and Strong Institutions)	Continuous engagement through teaching, research, and community outreach aligned with SDG benchmarks.

ANNEXURE II – GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

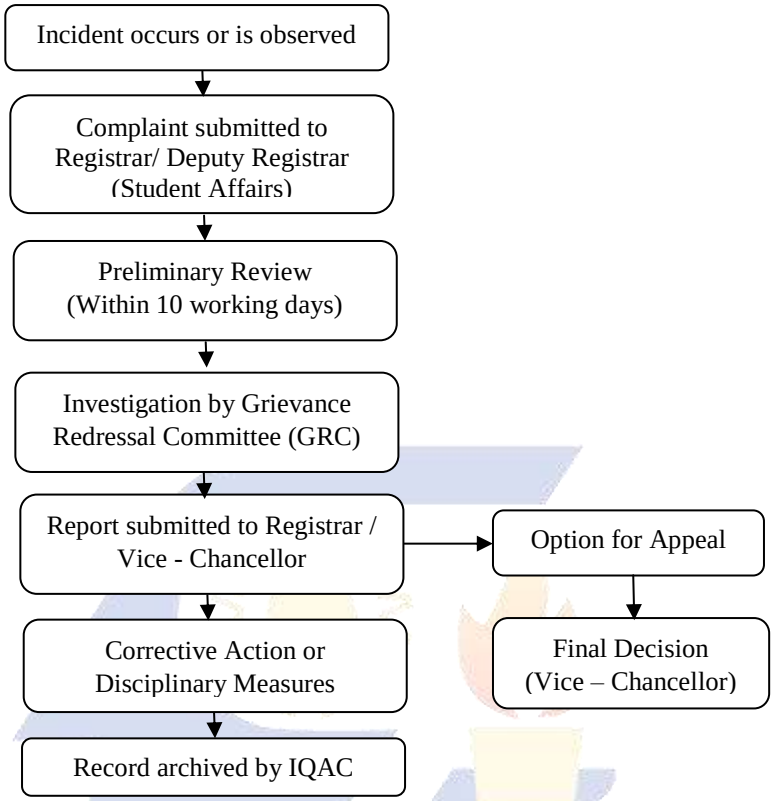


Figure 1: Grievance Redressal Process Flow

ANNEXURE III – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Form
AICTE	All India Council for Technical Education
ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (USA)
GRC	Grievance Redressal Committee
ICC	Internal Complaints Committee
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cell
MoE	Ministry of Education, Government of India
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NBA	National Board of Accreditation
NCW	National Commission for Women
NEP	National Education Policy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
THE	Times Higher Education
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds Global University Rankings
UI	Universitas Indonesia (GreenMetric Ranking)
UGC	University Grants Commission

Prepared by

Director (QAA)

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences

Approved by

Vice-Chancellor

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences