Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy (Version 1.0)

Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy

Policy Owner: Human Resources Department

Approved By: Competent Authority

Review Cycle: Every three years or earlier, as required

A. Purpose

Geeta University is committed to an inclusive, equitable, respectful and discrimination-free environment for all members of its academic and administrative community, where every individual enjoys equal dignity, respect and access to educational, employment, professional development and institutional opportunities. This policy sets out the principles, procedures and responsibilities to prevent discrimination, promote equal opportunity, address grievances and ensure fair treatment in all University activities.

B. Objectives

- Promote equal opportunity and fair treatment in education, recruitment, employment, promotion, training and professional development.
- Prevent direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation, exclusion and unfair treatment on grounds of religion, sexuality, gender, age, caste, disability, and refugee or migrant status.
- Promote diversity, accessibility, inclusion and mutual respect, and a culture of accountability and fairness.
- Establish transparent mechanisms for reporting, investigating and resolving complaints, in compliance with applicable Indian laws, statutory requirements and University regulations.

C. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching employees (permanent, contractual, temporary and probationary), officers, administrators, visiting faculty, consultants, interns and trainees.
- Students, research scholars, applicants and prospective employees.
- Contract workers, outsourced personnel, service providers, vendors and others engaged in University activities.
- All campuses, departments, offices, hostels, laboratories, libraries, events, field activities and online platforms, whether in person or through digital means.

D. Policy Statement

(a) The University shall not tolerate discrimination, harassment, intimidation, exclusion or victimisation against any individual on any prohibited or legally protected ground, and shall treat everyone fairly and respectfully irrespective of background, identity or social circumstances.

(b) Decisions on admission, recruitment, appointment, remuneration, promotion, assessment, access to facilities, training and leadership opportunities shall rest on qualifications, merit, eligibility, performance, institutional requirements and applicable rules.

(c) Nothing in this policy prevents lawful affirmative action, reservation, reasonable accommodation or special measures required or permitted by law.

E. Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination

- **Religion:** no unfavourable treatment because of religion, beliefs, practices or lack of affiliation; no one shall be compelled to take part in religious activities as a condition of employment, education or access to facilities, except where a lawful requirement applies.
- **Sexuality:** no discrimination, harassment, exclusion or adverse treatment because of sexuality, sexual orientation or related identity; all shall be treated with dignity, subject to applicable law and University regulations.
- **Gender:** discrimination based on gender, sex, gender identity, gender expression or related characteristics is prohibited; equal opportunity shall be promoted in recruitment, academic participation, remuneration, advancement, leadership and facilities.
- **Age:** no one shall be unfairly disadvantaged because of age; decisions shall rest on relevant criteria and lawful eligibility requirements, not arbitrary age-based assumptions.
- **Caste:** discrimination, humiliation, exclusion, harassment or unequal treatment based on caste or related social identity is prohibited; complaints shall be addressed under applicable laws and institutional procedures.
- **Disability:** no discrimination against persons with disabilities; the University shall endeavour to provide reasonable accommodation, accessible infrastructure, communication support and inclusive learning and working arrangements, and no one shall be excluded merely because an accommodation is required.
- **Refugee or migrant status:** no unfair treatment, harassment, exclusion or exploitation because of refugee or migrant status, place of origin, nationality or displacement, to the extent protected by law; fair access to opportunities shall be ensured, subject to admission criteria, eligibility, documentation, immigration laws and other lawful conditions.
- **Other grounds:** discrimination on any other ground prohibited by law or University regulations is also prohibited.

F. Areas Covered by Equal Opportunity

- **Admission and enrolment:** fair, transparent procedures; consistent application of published criteria; non-discriminatory access to programmes and services; applicable reservation and inclusion requirements.
- **Recruitment and employment:** fair, merit-based selection with equal consideration of eligible candidates; non-discriminatory appointment, probation, confirmation and conditions; fair access to training, appraisal and promotion.
- **Compensation and benefits:** remuneration based on role, qualifications, experience, performance and applicable pay policies; periodic review to address unjustified disparities; equal access to benefits and welfare provisions.
- **Academic and professional development:** equal access to mentoring, research, conferences, training and scholarships, subject to eligibility; fair evaluation; support for those needing reasonable accommodation.
- **Campus facilities and participation:** fair access to libraries, laboratories, hostels, sports, events and student services, subject to rules; respectful participation in institutional activities; accessibility measures where required.

G. Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation

The University shall endeavour to identify and remove physical, procedural, communication-related and attitudinal barriers to full participation. Where appropriate and legally required, reasonable accommodation may include accessible buildings and facilities, assistive technologies and learning materials, suitable examination arrangements, adjustments to workplace practices

or schedules, and accessible communication and support services. Requests shall be considered confidentially, fairly and within the applicable legal and administrative framework.

H. Roles and Responsibilities

a. University Management

- Provide direction, allocate resources and ensure accountability for implementation.

b. Human Resources Department

- Promote non-discriminatory recruitment and employment practices and communicate the policy to stakeholders.
- Maintain complaint records, coordinate employment-related investigations, recommend corrective measures and conduct awareness programmes.

c. Heads of Departments and Supervisors

- Ensure fair and consistent treatment in their units and address inappropriate conduct promptly.
- Refer complaints to the designated authority and prevent retaliation against complainants and witnesses.

d. Designated Committees and Authorities

- Handle matters within their jurisdiction in accordance with applicable laws and institutional procedures.

e. Employees and Students

- Treat others with dignity, refrain from discrimination, harassment and intimidation, and cooperate with authorised investigations.
- Report suspected violations through appropriate channels, respect confidentiality and avoid retaliation.

I. Complaint and Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Any individual who experiences, witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may violate this policy may submit a complaint, in writing or through an officially notified channel, to HR, the designated grievance redressal authority or the appropriate statutory committee. The University shall:

- Acknowledge and record the complaint, make an initial assessment and refer it to the competent committee or authority where required.
- Ensure an impartial, fair and timely review, giving the parties a reasonable opportunity to present information, and communicate the outcome as permitted by law, maintaining confidentiality.
- Implement corrective, preventive or disciplinary action where a violation is established.

Complaints involving sexual harassment, caste-based offences, disability rights or other matters governed by specific legislation shall be referred to the relevant statutory mechanism or competent authority.

J. Protection Against Retaliation

The University strictly prohibits retaliation (threats, intimidation, adverse employment action, academic disadvantage, exclusion or other unfair treatment) against anyone who, in good faith, reports discrimination or harassment, raises a concern, participates in an investigation, provides evidence, requests reasonable accommodation or exercises a legal right. Substantiated retaliation shall attract disciplinary or corrective measures. Knowingly false complaints made with malicious intent may be dealt with under applicable rules and due process; a complaint is not malicious merely because it is unsubstantiated.

K. Investigation and Corrective Action

Complaints shall be handled by the competent authority or committee in accordance with law, University rules, natural justice and established grievance procedures. Where a violation is established, action may include counselling or sensitisation, written warnings or formal directions, corrective measures or accommodation, disciplinary proceedings under service or student conduct rules, protective restrictions where justified, and referral to statutory authorities or law enforcement where legally required.

L. Awareness, Monitoring and Documentation

The University shall conduct orientation sessions, workshops on diversity, inclusion, accessibility and respectful conduct, awareness programmes on legal protections and grievance mechanisms, and periodic sensitisation of supervisors, administrators and committee members. Implementation shall be monitored periodically by reviewing complaints received and resolved, accessibility and accommodation measures, recruitment, training and promotion practices, feedback from employees and students, recurring concerns and awareness activities. Information shall be reported with due regard to privacy and data protection.

M. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Complaints, investigation records, accommodation requests and related personal information shall be handled confidentially and accessed only by authorised persons for legitimate institutional or legal purposes, and retained under applicable law and record-retention procedures.

N. Non-Compliance

Any employee, student, contractor or other covered person who violates this policy may face corrective or disciplinary action under University rules, contractual terms, statutory requirements and natural justice.

O. Policy Review and Amendment

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years, or earlier if required by changes in legislation, statutory directions, institutional requirements or implementation gaps. Amendments require approval of the competent authority, and the latest approved version shall be communicated to stakeholders and kept in the University's official policy repository.

P. Approval and Implementation

This policy takes effect from the date of approval by the competent authority. HR, in coordination with relevant departments and designated committees, shall facilitate its communication, implementation, monitoring and periodic review.

Deputy Registrar

Satya Vir Singh

Registrar

GEETA UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR PANIPAT