Academic Freedom Policy
(Version 1.0)

Academic Freedom Policy

A. Preamble

Academic freedom is essential to the pursuit of knowledge, the quality of teaching and research, and the University's service to society. It allows faculty and students to inquire, question, teach, learn and publish without fear of undue interference or reprisal. Academic freedom carries with it the responsibility to uphold the highest standards of scholarship, integrity and respect for others. This policy is framed in line with the freedoms guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution of India, subject to reasonable restrictions under law, the National Education Policy 2020 and the regulations of the University Grants Commission, and supports the University's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). It establishes a structured and accountable framework to protect and promote academic freedom at Geeta University.

B. Objective

This policy is intended to protect the freedom of faculty, researchers and students to teach, learn, research, discuss and publish, to define the responsibilities that accompany these freedoms, and to provide a fair mechanism to address concerns of interference or violation.

C. Scope

This policy applies to all faculty, researchers, visiting and adjunct faculty and students of Geeta University, and to the administration, Schools, Departments and Centres of the University, in teaching, research, publication and academic discussion on campus and in University-related activities.

D. Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibility
Faculty / Researchers	Exercise academic freedom responsibly, maintain scholarly standards and research ethics, respect colleagues and students, and distinguish personal views from the University's position.
Students	Exercise the freedom to learn, question and express views with civility, respect academic integrity and the rights of others, and follow University rules.
Deans / Heads of Departments	Protect an open academic environment, ensure fair academic decisions, and refer concerns of interference to the Committee.
Deputy Registrar	Receive complaints, coordinate with the Academic Freedom Committee and relevant departments, and maintain records.
Academic Freedom Committee	Examine concerns in a fair and impartial manner, recommend resolution and review the working of this policy.
Registrar	Oversee policy compliance, ensure protection from retaliation and review exceptional cases.

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor	Safeguard academic freedom, decide appeals and exceptional cases.

E. Policy Provisions

(a) **Freedom to Teach:** Faculty shall be free to teach their subjects, discuss and debate ideas, and choose appropriate teaching methods and materials within the approved curriculum and learning outcomes, without fear of reprisal for presenting a scholarly view.

(b) **Freedom of Research:** Faculty and researchers shall be free to select research topics, methods and approaches, and to pursue inquiry, subject to ethical review, applicable law, funding terms and University research policies.

(c) **Freedom to Publish and Disseminate:** Faculty and researchers shall be free to publish and present their findings through scholarly channels, subject to the terms of agreements, intellectual property rights and the obligation to acknowledge contributions and disclose funding and conflicts of interest.

(d) **Freedom to Learn:** Students shall be free to ask questions, hold and express differing views, and engage in academic discussion in classrooms and academic forums, and shall be assessed solely on academic merit and not on the views they express.

(e) **Extramural Expression:** Faculty and students may speak and write as private citizens on matters of public concern, provided that they make clear that the views are their own and not those of the University, and do not use the University's name or resources for the purpose.

(f) **Institutional Autonomy and Independence of Funding:** The University shall safeguard academic decisions from improper influence by political, commercial, religious or other external interests. Funding agreements shall not allow sponsors to determine research outcomes or suppress publication, except for reasonable periods to protect intellectual property.

(g) **Responsibilities and Reasonable Limits:** Academic freedom does not extend to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, violation of research ethics, harassment, discrimination, defamation, incitement to violence or hatred, breach of confidentiality or violation of law, and shall be exercised in line with the University's code of conduct.

(h) **Respect and Inclusion in Academic Discourse:** Academic discussion shall be conducted with civility and respect for the dignity of persons, regardless of gender, religion, caste, region, disability or background, and shall be based on reasoned argument and evidence.

(i) **Academic Decisions and Due Process:** Decisions on appointment, promotion, assessment, assignments and disciplinary matters shall be based on merit, published criteria and fair procedure, and shall not be taken in retaliation for the lawful exercise of academic freedom.

(j) **Protection from Retaliation:** No person shall be penalised, threatened or disadvantaged for exercising academic freedom in accordance with this policy or for raising a concern in good faith.

(k) **Sensitive and Controversial Subjects:** The University recognises that scholarly work may address sensitive or controversial matters. Such work shall be conducted with academic rigour, appropriate ethical clearance and sensitivity, and shall not be restricted merely because it is controversial.

(l) **Academic Freedom Committee and Redressal:** An Academic Freedom Committee, chaired by a senior faculty member nominated by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, with representatives of faculty and students and an external academic expert, shall examine concerns and recommend resolution.

(m) **Special Approval Mechanism:** Exceptional cases, if any, may be considered with the approval of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor.

F. Process and Documentation

A person who believes their academic freedom has been infringed may follow the process outlined below:

- Submit a written complaint, with relevant details and supporting documents, at the Office of the Deputy Registrar within 30 days of the incident.
- The Deputy Registrar shall acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days and forward it to the Academic Freedom Committee.
- The Committee shall examine the matter, hear the concerned persons and submit its recommendation to the Registrar within 30 days.
- Upon approval from the Registrar, the recommended action shall be implemented, and the complainant informed of the outcome.
- A person dissatisfied with the decision may appeal to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor within 15 days, and the decision of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor shall be final.
- The Deputy Registrar shall maintain a confidential record of all complaints and outcomes.

G. Confidentiality and Transparency

- The identity of the complainant and details of the proceedings shall be kept confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- The Committee shall submit an annual report, without identifying individuals, to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor.
- This policy shall be made available to all faculty and students through the University ERP, the University website and the Admissions Office, and shall be reviewed every two years.

Deputy Registrar

Satya Vir Singh

Registrar

GEETA UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR PANIPAT