



VELS



INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ADVANCED STUDIES (VISTAS)
(Deemed to be University Estd. u/s 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
PALLAVARAM, THALAMBUR, PERIYAPALAYAM-CHENNAI
ACCREDITED BY NAAC WITH A++ GRADE

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS) is committed to a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) framework in all its academic and administrative functions, and this Anti-Discrimination Policy is a core instrument for realizing that commitment. In line with global DEI principles, VISTAS values diversity as the presence of people from different castes, communities, regions, nations, genders, abilities, languages, faiths and socioeconomic backgrounds; equity as the removal of systemic barriers and the provision of appropriate support so that all can succeed; and inclusion as creating an institutional culture where every member feels respected, safe, and able to participate fully in campus life.

In accordance with UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations and guidelines on Equal Opportunity Cell, Gender Inclusion and Sensitization, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS) is committed to providing a safe, secure, and enabling environment free from discrimination for all stakeholders. VISTAS adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination at the workplace and campus. All complaints shall be addressed in a fair, confidential, and time-bound manner ensuring adherence to the principles of natural justice. No person shall be subjected to victimization or retaliation for filing a complaint or participating in an inquiry. The **Anti-Discrimination Cell (ADC)** is duly constituted to prevent, prohibit, and redress discrimination, and details of the ADC and redressal mechanism are displayed on the Institution's official website. In addition to that Equal Opportunity Cell, Gender Sensitization Cell are functioning in full fledged manner .

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires:

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Aggrieved Person means any individual (student, employee, or visitor), irrespective of age, gender, or status, who alleges to have been subjected to any act of discrimination by the respondent.

Campus includes all locations within the physical boundaries of VISTAS and all places visited by employees or students arising out of or during the course of employment or study, including transportation provided by the Institution, fieldwork locations, internships, study tours, sports events, cultural activities, hostels, and virtual/online platforms used for academic or official purposes.

Employee means a person employed at VISTAS for any work on regular, temporary, ad hoc, or daily wage basis, either directly or through an agent, including faculty, staff, administrative personnel, contractual workers, and interns.


Student means a person duly admitted and pursuing any programme of study at VISTAS, including research scholars.

Discrimination includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour whether directly or by implication, namely:

- i. Unfavourable treatment based on protected characteristics such as gender, caste, religion, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic background.
- ii. Exclusion from opportunities, services, or benefits.
- iii. Harassment creating a hostile environment.
- iv. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct violating dignity or denying equal opportunity.

The following circumstances, among others, if occurring in relation to or connected with any act of discrimination, may amount to discrimination: implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment; threat of detrimental treatment; interference with work or study; creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment; humiliating treatment likely to affect health or safety.

Anti-Discrimination Cell (ADC) means the committee constituted by VISTAS integrating functions of Gender Sensitization Cell and Equal Opportunity Cell, in accordance with UGC guidelines.


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The Policy Statement

This Policy applies to all employees and students of VISTAS and covers discrimination occurring at the workplace or campus, including academic, administrative, residential, recreational, and online spaces. The Policy extends to third parties such as visitors, service providers, and outsiders interacting with employees or students in connection with institutional activities.

Discrimination is unwelcome conduct based on protected characteristics which makes a person feel offended, humiliated, and/or intimidated. It includes situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating, or humiliating for the recipient. Discrimination can involve one or more incidents and actions constituting discrimination may be physical, verbal, and non-verbal.

Examples of conduct or behavior which constitute discrimination include, but are not limited to:

Scope of the Policy

- Exclusion from group activities or opportunities due to caste, gender, or religion.
- Derogatory remarks or jokes about ethnicity, disability, or socioeconomic status.
- Denial of accommodations for PwD or unequal evaluation based on biases.

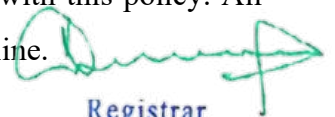
Verbal conduct

- Comments on appearance, private life, or cultural practices.
- Insults based on gender, caste, or nationality.
- Repeated exclusionary social invitations or microaggressions.

Non-verbal conduct

- Discriminatory gestures or exclusionary body language.
- Segregated seating or events based on protected characteristics.

Anyone can be a victim of discrimination, regardless of their protected characteristic. VISTAS recognizes that discrimination often occurs within unequal relationships, e.g., faculty-student or senior-junior. Anyone who discriminates will be reprimanded in accordance with this policy. All discrimination is prohibited on or off premises, including social events and online.



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Complaints Procedures

Anyone who is subject to discrimination should, if possible, inform the alleged discriminator that the conduct is unwanted. If unable, approach a designated staff member, ADC member, or Nodal Officer. The recipient will:

- Record dates, times, facts.
- Ascertain views and agree next steps (informal/formal).
- Keep confidential record.
- Ensure victim knows external options (e.g., State Human Rights Commission).

Victims entitled to campus counselor support. VISTAS nominates counselors trained to assist.

Informal complaints mechanism

Facilitate discussion or mediation within 1-2 days.


Formal complaints mechanism

Refer to ADC Chairperson. Complaints can be via mail , paper, or hotline within 3 months (extendable). ADC conducts inquiry per natural justice, completes in 90 days, reports to competent authority (Vice-Chancellor) within 10 days. Authority acts within 60 days. The following committee members details are available in the website for easy access .

<https://vistas.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Anti-Discrimination.pdf>

<https://naac.vistas.ac.in/web/Committees/Equal%20Opportunity%20Cell.pdf>

<https://vistas.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Gender-Sensitization-24-25.pdf>


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Sanctions and Disciplinary Measures

Liabile to:

- Verbal/Written Warning.
- Adverse Evaluation.
- Reduction in Grades/Increment.
- Transfer/Demotion.
- Suspension/Dismissal.
Nature depends on gravity; serious cases immediate dismissal.

Confidentiality

Contents not published except as required by law.

Awareness and Preventive Measures

Regular workshops, training; display policy on website/campus. Include in handbooks, orientations.

Implementation

Disseminate widely; faculty ensure awareness.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Annual reports to UGC/NAAC; evaluate effectiveness yearly and amend the policy time to time based on the instructions from all academic and Apex bodies .

Conclusion

Anti-Discrimination Policy reaffirms VISTAS's unwavering commitment to upholding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as foundational institutional values and not merely aspirational goals. By clearly defining discriminatory conduct, establishing dedicated redressal mechanisms, and embedding proactive measures such as awareness, training and periodic review, VISTAS seeks to ensure that every student, staff member and stakeholder can learn and work in an environment that is fair, respectful and inclusive. All members of the VISTAS community share responsibility for knowing, respecting and implementing this Policy so that the campus remains a safe, welcoming and empowering space for people from all backgrounds, identities and abilities.

Policy Renewed on : 16.10.24


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