WOMEN'S ACCESS & PARTICIPATION POLICY

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Preamble

P. P. Savani University (PPSU), Surat, strives to provide a welcoming and supportive environment where women can pursue higher education, develop their abilities and achieve their academic and career goals. The University believes that every woman should have a fair opportunity to seek admission, continue her education and take part in academic, cultural and extracurricular activities without facing discrimination.

The University also understands that women may face challenges related to financial constraints, family responsibilities, social expectations, safety and limited opportunities in certain fields of study. Through this policy, PPSU aims to address these challenges by promoting equal opportunities, providing appropriate support and encouraging the active participation of women in all aspects of university life.

The policy supports the principles of equality, dignity, non-discrimination, accessibility, student welfare and accountable institutional governance.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Promote equal opportunities for women to apply for and enter all eligible academic programmes at PPSU.
2. Ensure transparent, fair and non-discriminatory admission procedures.
3. Identify and reduce barriers that limit women's access to higher education, particularly in disciplines where women are underrepresented.
4. Support women's retention, academic performance, progression, completion and graduation.
5. Encourage women's participation in research, innovation, entrepreneurship, sports, cultural activities, student governance and leadership.
6. Strengthen access to scholarships, mentoring, counselling, career guidance and other appropriate support services.
7. Provide a safe and respectful campus environment free from unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, intimidation and gender-based violence.

8. Monitor women's applications, admissions, enrolment, retention, completion and participation through reliable, gender-disaggregated data.
9. Establish accountability, periodic evaluation and corrective action to improve gender equity.
10. Promote gender awareness and shared responsibility among students, faculty, staff, administrators and university leadership.

Scope

The policy shall be implemented alongside the University's applicable admission rules, scholarship regulations, student welfare policies, equal-opportunity provisions, anti-ragging rules and sexual-harassment prevention procedures

Implementation

The University shall implement this policy in accordance with the following principles:

Equality of opportunity: Women shall have equal opportunities to apply, qualify, enrol and participate in eligible university programmes.

Merit and transparency: Admission decisions shall follow published eligibility requirements, academic criteria, applicable entrance examinations and other lawful programme-specific requirements.

Accessibility and inclusion: Appropriate efforts shall be made to identify and address barriers affecting women from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, rural communities and other underrepresented groups.

Confidentiality and accountability: Personal information and complaints shall be handled with appropriate confidentiality, due process and protection against retaliation.

Policy Provisions

Women's Applications and Outreach

The University shall endeavour to increase awareness of higher education opportunities among prospective women students through:

i. Accurate and accessible information on programmes, eligibility, admission procedures, scholarships, fees and student support.
ii. School and college outreach programmes, career guidance sessions, open days and campus visits.
iii. Awareness campaigns for parents, families, teachers and communities concerning women's higher education and career opportunities.
iv. Outreach initiatives encouraging applications by women in disciplines where they are underrepresented, including engineering, technology, computing, research and other relevant fields.

v. Collaboration, where feasible, with schools, community organisations and civil-society organisations.

vi. Accessible communication and reasonable assistance for applicants facing financial, geographical, disability-related or other barriers.

vii. Outreach programmes shall be designed to expand opportunity without compromising published admission criteria or applicable regulations.

Fair Admission, Acceptance and Entry

PPSU shall maintain fair, transparent and consistently applied admission procedures.

The University shall:

i. Publish eligibility requirements, selection criteria, application deadlines and admission procedures before the relevant admission cycle.

ii. Assess applicants using the prescribed academic, entrance-test and other legitimate programme-specific criteria.

iii. Ensure that gender does not operate as an unlawful or arbitrary barrier to admission.

iv. Provide applicants with equal access to admission counselling, application assistance and relevant information.

v. Review admission procedures to identify unintended barriers that may disproportionately affect women.

vi. Maintain appropriate records of applications, offers, acceptances, enrolments and reasons for withdrawal where available.

vii. Ensure that admission-related decisions and complaints are handled through established institutional procedures.

viii. Implement any reservation, relaxation, scholarship or affirmative-support measure only where duly authorised and consistent with applicable law and university regulations.

Scholarships and Financial Assistance

The University shall endeavour to improve women's access to financial support through:

i. Dissemination of information about merit-based, need-based and other eligible scholarships.

ii. Identification of financial barriers that may prevent eligible women from applying, accepting admission or continuing their studies.

iii. Guidance on government scholarships, external fellowships, education assistance and financial-aid schemes.

iv. Transparent publication of scholarship eligibility, application procedures, selection criteria and benefits.

v. Periodic assessment of women's access to available financial assistance.

Retention, Academic Progression and Graduation

PPSU recognises that gender equity requires support beyond admission.

The University shall endeavour to:

i. Provide academic mentoring, tutorials, remedial support and faculty guidance where needed.

ii. Monitor retention, semester progression, examination outcomes, programme completion and graduation rates.

iii. Identify factors contributing to absence, delayed progression, discontinuation or withdrawal among women students.

iv. Provide appropriate academic advising and referral to counselling, student welfare and financial-support services.

v. Facilitate reasonable academic arrangements for eligible students experiencing pregnancy, maternity, medical circumstances or caregiving responsibilities, in accordance with university regulations and applicable law.

vi. Provide guidance on re-entry, continuation or resumption of studies where permitted by programme requirements and applicable rules.

vii. Review significant differences in outcomes between women and other student groups and implement proportionate corrective measures where warranted.

Mentoring, Leadership and Empowerment

The Women's Development Cell, in collaboration with relevant university departments, shall facilitate appropriate initiatives such as:

i. A structured mentoring programme connecting women students with faculty members, researchers, alumni and industry professionals.

ii. Leadership development, communication skills, career planning and entrepreneurship workshops.

iii. Peer-support groups and networking opportunities.

iv. Career guidance and encouragement for postgraduate study, doctoral research and academic careers.

v. Awareness programmes highlighting women's achievements in science, technology, business, healthcare, education and other fields.

vi. Encouragement of women's representation in student leadership and university activities, consistent with applicable eligibility rules.

vii. The University may establish measurable participation targets for mentoring and leadership initiatives following a baseline assessment and approval by the competent authority.

6.7 Safety, Dignity and Protection from Harassment

PPSU shall strive to maintain a safe and respectful environment for women students and personnel.

The University shall:

i. Implement applicable laws and regulations concerning the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment and other prohibited conduct.

ii. Maintain and publicise appropriate complaint-reporting channels and the responsibilities of the Internal Committee and other competent bodies.

iii. Provide gender-sensitisation and awareness programmes for students, faculty, staff and administrators.

iv. Review campus safety arrangements, including lighting, access control, transport arrangements and safety measures for university-sponsored activities, as appropriate.

v. Provide information about counselling, student welfare and other support services to individuals seeking assistance.

vi. Ensure that complaints are handled fairly, sensitively and confidentially, subject to legal obligations and procedural requirements.

vii. Prohibit retaliation against individuals who raise concerns or participate in complaint proceedings in good faith.

viii. Refer complaints to the competent statutory or institutional mechanism rather than substituting the Women's Development Cell for the legally designated authority.

Maternity, Parenting and Caregiving Support

Subject to applicable laws, programme requirements and approved university regulations, PPSU shall endeavour to support women students who are pregnant, are mothers or have caregiving responsibilities.

Support may include:

i. Information on authorised leave, attendance requirements, examinations and academic continuation.

ii. Reasonable academic flexibility where permitted under applicable regulations.

iii. Counselling and referral to relevant health, welfare and student-support services.

iv. Guidance for eligible research scholars regarding approved maternity-related leave and resumption of research.

v. Assessment of the feasibility of childcare support, childcare referrals or partnerships with suitable providers.

vi. Measures to reduce unnecessary administrative barriers to continued study.

vii. These provisions shall not be interpreted as automatically granting exemptions from statutory, professional or programme-specific requirements.

Institutional Responsibilities

University Management

University Management shall approve the policy, provide strategic direction and consider resource requirements for implementation.

Office of the Registrar

The Registrar shall coordinate institutional implementation, policy dissemination and reporting to the competent university authority.

Admissions Office

The Admissions Office shall maintain appropriate admissions data, review application and entry trends and support fair and transparent admissions procedures.

Women's Development Cell

The WDC shall coordinate awareness, mentoring, empowerment initiatives, stakeholder consultation and recommendations for improving women's participation. It shall collaborate with other authorised bodies and shall not replace their statutory responsibilities.

Deans, Heads of Departments and Programme Coordinators

Academic units shall review programme-level data, identify barriers and implement approved corrective measures.

Internal Committee and Other Competent Bodies

The Internal Committee and other authorised institutional bodies shall discharge their respective responsibilities under applicable laws and university regulations.

Faculty, Staff and Students

All university community members shall respect the principles of this policy and participate in relevant awareness and institutional improvement activities.

Grievance Redressal and Protection Against Retaliation

A student or applicant who believes that she has experienced discrimination or an unfair barrier covered by this policy may approach the appropriate university authority through the applicable grievance mechanism.

Complaints involving sexual harassment shall be handled through the Internal Committee or other legally designated mechanism, as applicable. Other matters shall be referred to the competent grievance-redressal authority.

The University shall endeavour to ensure:

i. Accessible information on complaint procedures.

ii. Fair and timely handling in accordance with applicable rules.

iii. Appropriate confidentiality and protection of personal information.

iv. Protection against retaliation for good-faith reporting, subject to applicable procedures.

v. Documentation of outcomes and recommendations for institutional improvement, using anonymised or aggregated information where appropriate.

Review and Continuous Improvement

The policy shall be reviewed at least every three years by the designated institutional authority in consultation with the Women's Development Cell, Admissions Office, academic units and other relevant stakeholders.

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