APPENDIX-A

DHARMSINH DESAI UNIVERSITY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CELL POLICY

1. Preamble

Dharmsinh Desai University (DDU) is the state university established under "The Dharmsinh Desai University Act, 2005 (Gujarat Act No. 16 of 2005)". DDU is one of the leading university of Gujarat established since 1968 (formerly known as DDIT) in the Sakshar Bhoomi Nadiad.

Since inception, DDU's endeavour is to prepare students for leadership roles. The focus is not restricted only to the academic activities, but also emphasizes on the holistic development. DDU believes in generation and dissipation of knowledge to all groups of society and providing equal opportunities to all disadvantaged sections of the University, irrespective of gender, caste, religious belief, ability, language and socio-economic background.

India is the country having Unity in Diversity "Vividhata Ma Ekta". To full fill the real meaning of this, requires an open atmosphere and transparent policies at the workplace to promote the inclusive growth of all sections of the University. With this objective, The Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) is established by DDU as per UGC guidelines for EOC (XII plan 2012-2017) for fruitful interaction and to promote equality among all the stakeholders of the University; mainly the students and employees of DDU. This will enable students and employees to get equal opportunity to pursue education, research, sports, techno-cultural fest and other university activities with zeal.

The university aims to provide students and employees free from unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, any sort of bullying, victimisation and sexual harassment. The university is also committed to provide happy, healthy and safe environment within the campus to all stakeholders.

2. Scope

The EOC of DDU works for an affirmative actions of its students and employees.

3. Objectives and functions

The main objectives and functions of EOC of DDU are as follows based on UGC guidelines for scheme of EOC for colleges XII Plan 2012-2017.

(1) To ensure equity and equal opportunity to the community at large in the college and bring about social inclusion.

(2) To enhance the diversity among the students, teaching and non-teaching staff population and at the same time eliminate the perception of discrimination.

(3) To create a socially congenial atmosphere for academic interaction and for the growth of healthy interpersonal relationships among the students coming from various social backgrounds.

(4) To make efforts to sensitize the academic community regarding the problems associated with social exclusion as well as aspirations of the marginalized communities.

(5) To help individuals or a group of students belonging to the disadvantaged section of society to contain the problems related to discrimination.

(6) To look into the grievances of the weaker sectionof society and suggest amicable solution to their problems.

(7) To disseminate the information related to schemes and programmes for the welfare of the socially weaker section as well as notifications/memoranda, office orders of the Government, or other related agencies/organizations issued from time to time.

(8) To prepare barrier free formalities/procedures for admission/ registration of students belonging to the disadvantaged groups of society.

(9) To establish coordination with the Government and other agencies/organizations to mobilize academic and financial resources to provide assistance to students of the disadvantaged groups.To organize periodic meetings to monitor the progress of different schemes.

(10) To adopt measures to ensure due share of utilization by SC/ST in admissions, recruitments (teaching and non-teaching posts) and to improve their performances.

(11) To sensitize the college on the problems of SC/ST and other disadvantaged groups.

4. Definitions

Following definitions are adopted in the light of equal opportunity to disadvantaged group.

"**Disadvantaged group**" refers to a group of people who are disadvantaged or lack opportunities for causes beyond their control, or who have a limited ability to take advantage of existing possibilities to access rights and entitlements provided by law or government initiatives.

"**Equal opportunity**" means to consider people as individuals with varying skills and capacities rather than making assumptions based on stereotypes or criteria listed in anti-discrimination legislation. Sex, age, race, sexuality, disability, pregnancy, and marital status are examples of these qualities.

"**Discrimination**" includes any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex, caste, language, religion, disability, descent, place of birth, residence, race, or any other parameter that results in less favourable treatment that is unjustified or has the effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise of equality of opportunity, but excludes affirmative action for the accomplishment of constitutional obligations toward Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes, women and children.

"Diversity" refers to differences in age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family responsibilities, gender, language, marital status, religious belief, and sexual orientation among individuals or groups of people; it can also refer to differences in learning, life experience, work experience, and socioeconomic background.

"**Employee**" means any person employed by the University.

"**Parties**" refers to the University's complainant or victim and respondent.

"**Student**" relates to an individual who is enrolled in, or seeking to enroll in, one or more University programs.

"**Workplace**" refers to any location where a person goes to perform any functions related to his or her employment. In the context of the University, this includes all work-related activities on and off campus that are directly related to an employee's employment.

"**Victimization**" refers to any form of retaliation directed at a person for alleging, making or participating in, supporting, or resolving a complaint of discrimination, sexual harassment, or victimization; or directed at a person associated with a person who alleges, makes or

participates in, supports, or resolves a complaint of discrimination, sexual harassment, or victimization.

“Bullying” is defined as repeated, unreasonable behavior directed toward an employee or student, or a group of employees or students, which poses a risk to health and safety.

"**Person with disability**” means a person suffering from any of the following disability:

- **'Locomotor Disability'** means disability of the bones, joints or muscles leading to substantial restriction of the movement of the limbs
- **'Cerebral Palsy'** means a group of non-progressive conditions of a person characterized by abnormal motor control posture resulting from brain insult or injuries occurring in the pre- natal, peri-natal or infant period of development;
- **'Leprosy cured person'** means any person who has been cured of leprosy but is suffering from
- **“Loss of Sensation”** means loss of sensation in hands or feet as well as loss of sensation and paresis in the eye and eye- lid but with no manifest deformity; manifest deformity and paresis but having sufficient mobility in their hands and feet to enable them to engage in normal economic activity; extreme physical deformity as well as advanced age which prevents him from undertaking any gainful occupation, and the expression "leprosy cured" shall be construed accordingly;
- **'Blindness'** refers to a condition where a person suffers from any of the following conditions, namely: -
    - **Total absence of sight** or visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with correcting lenses; or Limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degree or worse;
    - **Person with low vision'** means a person with impairment of visual functioning even after treatment or standard refractive correction but who uses or is potentially capable of using vision for the planning or execution of a task with appropriate assistive device;
- **'Hearing impairment'** means loss of sixty decibels or more in the better ear in the conversational range of frequencies;
- **'Mental illness'** means any mental disorder other than mental retardation;
- **'Mental retardation'** means a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a person which is specially characterized by sub-normality of intelligence.

5. Operational Aspects

To the greatest extent possible, the University will take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, or victimization. Employees and students bound by this policy must follow all of the policy's rules and regulations. Employees and students, in particular, must not engage in bullying/victimization/discrimination against other employees or students, including physical, visual, verbal, and nonverbal behavior. Failure to do so may result in the individual being held legally responsible, and those who violate the policy face serious penalties.

5.1 Advisory Committee

The advisory committee consist of following members.

(1) Vice Chancellor (VC)

(2) Registrar

(3) IQAC Coordinator

(4) EOC convener

(5) Legal expert nominated by VC

The advisory committee examines the principle of equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, ability, socioeconomic background, caste, religion, or language. The Committee should meet at least once every six months, and decisions and actions should be reviewed.

5.2 Working Committee Members/Nodal Officers

The name and details of working committee members of EOC are as follows.

(1) Coordinator/Convener: Dr. Rajnikant B. Mardia
Email: rajnikantmaradia.ph@ddu.ac.in

(2) Scheduled Caste (SC) representative: Mr. Deepak C. Vegda
Email: deepakvegda.it@ddu.ac.in

(3) Scheduled Tribe (ST) representative: Dr. Kinjal J. Vasava
Email: kinjalvasava@yahoo.com

(4) Other Backward Caste (OBC) representative: Mr. Siddharth C. Modi
Email: siddharth.modi.ch@ddu.ac.in

(5) Minority representative: Dr. Kaisar J. Ansari
Email: kaisarjahanansari.eng.@ddu.ac.in

(6) Handicap representative: Dr. G. D. Bassan
Email: gdbassan.mech@ddu.ac.in

5.3 The responsibilities of EOC Coordinator/Convener of the University:

i. To look after the seminars/ symposia/ workshops/ conferences/ exhibitions etc. from time- to-time to empower the weaker sections/disadvantaged groups.
ii. To monitor the effective functioning of EOC dealing with the problems of disadvantaged groups.
iii. To convene the meeting of all the EOC members time to time to address the issues such as Gender Sensitization Committee against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH), National Service Schemes (NSS) etc. to review their activities.
iv. To redress the grievances and maintain the records about discrimination/victimization/bullying.
v. To submit the timely progress achieved by EOC to the Vice Chancellor at regular interval.

5.4 Support to disadvantaged groups

Support to Disadvantaged Groups

EOC is expected to facilitate for providing following facilities to aforesaid groups:

- Waiver of fees (fully or partly) as per University rules and Government rules
- Computer lab equipped with best assistive software and devices.
- Subsidized transport facility to the weaker sections of DDU
- Monitor the assistive devices like wheel chair, blind stick, ramps and specially designed washrooms for handicapped stakeholders.
- Maintain the record of "Writers Bank" for handicapped students
- DVDs and Books on Disability issues
- Orientation Workshops for Persons with Disabilities
- Provision of Medical Health check-up
- Special attention towards the placement of disadvantaged group
- Counselling sessions for weak students

- Strength and capacity building classes

5.5 Expectations

- To ensure and promote equal opportunity to the disadvantaged groups, EOC is expected to carry out following activities:
- Sensitization and awareness programs on a wide array of subjects ranging from Gender Issues, Human Rights, and Inclusion of Marginalized Groups to Peace and Conflict.
- Health awareness and medical camps for students, employee and resident community of nearby area (on reproductive health and AIDS awareness, cancer awareness programs, Nutrition and hygiene awareness, Eye check- ups, Digestive Health and Lifestyle diseases, etc.).
- Workshop on Women Empowerment for students and employee of University.
- National workshops, seminars or conferences on current and relevant issues by availing special funds from UGC, ICSSR, National Human rights commission, National Commission for women, etc.
- Workshops on Legal Education and Equality, Awareness about Legal redressal and conflict resolution.
- Special Lecture series by Eminent Personalities and Academicians on subjects like Gender issues, Equality and Discrimination, Differently abled and their problems, etc.
- Coaching and Tuition classes for deprived children and youth by student Volunteers.
- A special academic Help Centre for students of University, who need extra help with their syllabi and studies; which can be run by outstanding student volunteers.
- Socio-Cultural interactive activities for the disadvantaged group.
- Computer literacy for the students of University as well as the underprivileged and the unemployed youth and children of the locality.
- Basic literacy and education through student volunteers for the poor children of the locality under "Joy of Giving" Programme.
- Training on Hospitality management to employee of University.
- Counselling on personal and psychological problems.
- Enhancing life skills in students and employee of University

5.6 Operational / Complaint Mechanism or Procedures or Grievances

The EOC has to fulfill its mandate of maintaining social harmony among various sections of the University. Whenever any case of social discrimination is brought before the EOC, it is thoroughly investigated and examined and suitable action is recommended. Addressing of issues related to any social discrimination faced by students or employee at any level is amongst the principal objectives of the EOC.

The University encourages any person who feels he or she has been discriminated against or harassed to promptly report the incident to the EOC. Any member of the University who observes discrimination or harassment of another person on campus, in connection with a University program or activity, or in a manner that creates a hostile environment for students or employees of University should report the conduct to the EOC. No student or employee of University should assume that an official of the University knows about a particular discriminatory or harassing situation.

An employee or student who believes that he or she has experienced unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, bullying or victimization may make a complaint. Discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimization may be regarded as serious misconduct or misconduct (employee) or general misconduct (students) and may result in disciplinary action.

5.6.1 Reporting

Any administrator, faculty member, or other person in a position of authority who receives a complaint of discrimination or harassment must fully report the information or complaint to the EOC promptly. A complaint or report of discrimination or harassment made to any administrator, faculty member or other person in a position of authority generally obligates the University to investigate the incident and take appropriate steps to address the situation. The responsibility to investigate rests with the EOC and not with the employee who receives the complaint or report. Failure to promptly report may constitute a violation of the EOC Policy.

5.7 Violation of Policy

5.7.1 Standard of Proof

Investigative findings under this Policy will be made using the preponderance of the evidence standard (i.e., "more likely than not"). This standard requires that the

information supporting an alleged violation be more convincing than the information in opposition to it.

5.7.2 Interim Protective Measures

The Vice Chancellor or his/her designee (power of attorney) or EOC coordinator may impose interim protective measures before the final outcome of an investigation if failure to take the interim measures would constitute a threat to the safety and well-being of the complainant or other employees or students of the University. Imposing interim protective measures does not indicate that a violation of this Policy has occurred.

These interim measures may include but are not limited to:

- Issuance of a "no contact" directive;
- Restrictions or bars to entering certain University property;
- Changes to academic or employment arrangements, schedules or supervision;
- Interim suspension; and
- Other measures designed to promote the safety and well-being of the parties.

In imposing interim measures, the EOC coordinator will attempt to minimize the burden on both the alleged victim and respondent. Any party may appeal interim measures in writing to the Vice Chancellor within two working days of the party's receipt of the notification of the restriction. All interim protective measures will remain in effect during the appeal and thereafter unless modified by the EOC coordinator or Vice Chancellor or overturned by the Registrar.

5.7.3 Initiating an Investigation

As part of any investigative process, the investigator will:

- Provide a copy of this Policy to the complainant;
- Determine whether the complaint is one that falls under the Policy or not;
- Inform the respondent of the complaint brought against him/her and provide a copy of this Policy.

5.7.4 Informal Process

The informal process is an opportunity to bring resolution to a complaint through awareness, education, and/or a facilitated discussion. Informal resolution may be

appropriate if the complainant, respondent and EOC coordinator or his or her designee all agree.

During an informal process, fact-finding occurs to the extent necessary to resolve the conflict and protect the interest of the parties and the University, but the EOC coordinator or his or her designee does not make a determination of whether the Policy has been violated. The complainant or respondent always has the option to end the informal process and request a formal process.

Informal resolutions may include, but are not limited to:

- Training;
- Changes to work or academic arrangements;
- Informal discussion with person whose conduct, if not stopped, could rise to the level of discrimination or harassment;
- Advisory discussion with the respondent's professor or advisor;
- "No contact" directive to one or more of the parties; and
- Suspension.

5.7.5 Formal Process

All complaints that are not resolved through the informal process are resolved through a formal process involving a full investigation conducted by the EOC coordinator or his/her designees.

As part of the formal process, the investigator will:

- Inform complainant, alleged victim, and respondent of their right to be interviewed and provide evidence;
- Obtain information and evidence, including the identity of any witnesses, from the complainant and the respondent;
- Attempt to obtain information from the identified witnesses;
- Collect and maintain appropriate documentation;
- Disclose appropriate information to others only on a need-to-know basis consistent with state and central law; and
- Keep the appropriate administrators/faculty informed of the status of the complaint and investigation, and seek input from them as appropriate when implementing any resolution or discipline.

Interviews with the investigator constitute the hearing.

5.7.6 Resolution

The amount of time needed to conduct an investigation will depend in part on the nature of the allegation(s) and the evidence to be investigated (e.g., the scope of the allegations, the time period and number of events implicated by or relevant to the complaint, the number or availability of witnesses involved and the volume of documents). Within 60 working days of receipt of the complaint, the EOC coordinator or his/her designee will provide notice of the outcome of the investigation or will advise the parties of the additional estimated amount of time needed for the investigation. Upon conclusion, EOC coordinator or his/her designee will notify the complainant and respondent, in writing, of the results of the investigation. The written decision will be disclosed only to the complainant, respondent, and University officials as appropriate to determine and enforce any remedial actions, discipline or sanctions, and to prepare for any appeals. The EOC coordinator will follow up as appropriate to ensure that remedial action is effective. Complainants are encouraged to report any reoccurrences of conduct that were found to violate this Policy, as well as to report any retaliation for the complaint or related investigation. Remedial and preventative measures may be imposed by the EOC coordinator even in the absence of a violation of this Policy if conduct is found to occur that may, if not addressed, rise to the level of a violation. Any unprofessional conduct or inappropriate behavior found during the course of the investigation that is not covered by the Policy will be addressed with the respective department or Human Resources department.

5.7.7 Remedies

Where discrimination or harassment in violation of this Policy is determined to have occurred, the University will take timely action to remedy the effects. Potential remedies for the complainant or victim include, but are not limited to:

- Extensions of time to re-do or complete academic work without an academic or financial penalty;
- Changes to academic or employment arrangements, schedules or supervision that minimize burden on the complainant or victim;
- Referral to medical, counselling, and academic support services;
- Training/re-training on this Policy and other relevant topics for individuals or groups implicated in the discrimination or harassment; and

- Other measures designed to repair negative impact of discrimination or harassment.

5.7.8 Sanctions

If a violation of this Policy is found, the level of disciplinary action and type or scope of sanctions will depend on the severity and nature of the discrimination or harassment, the weight of the evidence, and the need to maintain a safe and respectful environment. Available sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Mandatory training or counselling;
- "No Contact" directive;
- Restriction or bar to entering certain University property or attending University events;
- Written warning;
- Transcript notation;
- Probation;
- Suspension; and
- Expulsion or termination.

5.7.9 Right to Appeal

All parties shall have the right to appeal the outcome of the formal process and decision to the University Vice Chancellor pursuant to this Policy. The Vice Chancellor must receive a written appeal within ten (10) working days after the receipt of the written notification of the decision being appealed. The Vice Chancellor or his/her designee may receive additional information if he/she believes such information would aid in the appeal.

The Vice Chancellor may overturn or modify a finding or sanction if, in his or her reasonable discretion, he or she finds any of the following factors had a material impact on the finding or sanction:

- Material failure to comply with applicable procedures in EOC Policy or to conduct a reasonably thorough investigation;
- Partiality, bias, or conflict of interest by the EOC Coordinator or his/her designee;

- Findings, if not overturned or modified, would result in a substantial injustice to a party or parties, including a substantially inadequate or excessive sanction; or
- New evidence that was not reasonably available to be presented by the parties during the course of the investigation.

A decision by the Vice Chancellor or his/her designee will be made within a reasonable time and the EOC Coordinator, the complainant, and the respondent will be notified in writing of the decision on the appeal. During the time of appeal and review, disciplinary action or sanction or remedial/preventative measures, if any, taken as a result of the original complaint may be implemented and enforced. Upon the request of the appealing party, the Vice Chancellor may, in his or her discretion, temporarily suspend the imposition of the disciplinary action, sanction, or remedial/preventative measures while the appeal is pending.

If an appeal is not filed within the appeal period, the findings become final and are not subject to any review

6. Review and Monitoring of Policy

The University (DDU) will review its policy of EOC for disadvantaged groups time to time and can make necessary changes to improve its effectiveness.

In this regard, any student or employee can put forward comments and suggestions about the policy for its betterment.