



Unveiling Excellence

# USTM

## DISABLED-FRIENDLY POLICY

*(Chapter - XVIII, University Policies & Guidelines)*

**Accessibility  
Confidence  
Empowerment  
Employability**



# CHAPTER XVIII

## DISABLED-FRIENDLY POLICY

### Introduction:

Disability is not an obstacle to become a member of USTM family. USTM has followed this philosophy in its daily activities and is the first institution of higher education to launch a programme which integrated people with disability into the society through higher education.

In 2018, USTM has introduced new flexible courses under the flagship initiative - “**I Can I Will Academy**”. This constituent of USTM is meant for the differently abled students and has a flexible curriculum and examination system. The curriculum includes both UG, PG & various skill based courses.

Employers and managers are increasingly realizing the need of employing a varied and diverse workforce. About 17.5 percent of people with disability are employed as per statistics available for 2015. This means that a large majority of disabled who are qualified are unemployed and are actively looking for a job.

Creating a disabled-friendly workplace is the first step towards employing more qualified disabled candidates. A workplace which offers support and encouragement will help disabled employees perform to their full potential and be productive in what they do.

There are several things that a company, employer or the HR can do to ensure that they adopt a disabled-friendly work culture. Physical accessibility should be of topmost concern, followed by adoption of assistive technology, continued training of employees and consistent monitoring.

### We at USTM committed to

#### 1. Build Awareness and Invest in Training

An aware workforce is also an empowered workforce. For disabled employees to be fully integrated into a workplace, it is essential that all employees are familiar with the affirmed commitment of their organization to being disabled-friendly.

Sensitizing trainings and etiquette classes will help full-bodied employees gain more insight into how to best deal with disabled coworkers. Some employees may be consciously or unconsciously biased about their disabled counterparts. Quality training from the part of the company will help dispel these notions. Employees should also be given basic information on how they can help their disabled colleagues in cases of emergency.

#### 2. Make Use of Assistive Technology

Assistive technology enables disabled people to be an active part of the workplace and has grown by leaps and bounds in the last few years. Most modern jobs require computers and use of technology. If your company invests in the right assistive technology, apps and online tools, disabled employees will be able to carry out their job responsibilities without impediments.

Some common assistive technology aids include color-coded keyboards, refreshable Braille displays, specialized screen reader software, assistive listening devices, speech recognition and sign language apps, and browsers that provide user-friendly and customizable Web interface.

It is also advised to install games or interactive activity apps on computers to engage and lighten the mood among employees.

Assistive technology becomes optimal only when you train disabled employees to best use them. Relevant and ongoing training are, hence, of utmost importance. Training should also be a crucial part of the entire on-boarding process for disabled employees.

### **3. Consider Outside Support**

Companies can also make use of outside support to give continued training to employees. Several non-profits and government agencies are working towards more inclusive workplaces that can hold seminars and awareness initiatives at your company. This not only improves employee participation and morale, but also helps bring fresh and new perspectives to approaching the issue.

Organizations can also work with local disability organizations and self-help groups to gain access to information regarding approaches and practices used at other corporate groups.

### **4. Make Accessibility a Priority**

A freely accessible workplace is incredibly important to disabled employees. It helps them move around, get their work done and enjoy the time spent at the workplace.

Disabled-friendly parking, wheelchair accessible doorways, ramps at entries and exits of buildings and cafeterias, wide corridors and easy access to workstations, accessible operating buttons and/or Braille in lifts, and accessible washrooms are some of the basic necessities required to make a workplace disabled-friendly. Meeting rooms and other common access areas also need to be given special attention to and made accessible to all disabled employees.

You must also make sure that the company website and all other communication materials are accessible to disabled users.

### **5. Be Honest With Appraisal and Feedback**

Another key factor for improving inclusivity at workplace is to provide honest and fair feedback to employees, irrespective of any bias.

If managers tend to show leniency to disabled employees during appraisal, this may affect their ability to detect drawbacks and better their performance. An honest feedback will help the disabled employee feel as responsible for his or her work as other averagely-abled employees.

This point also makes it evident that senior management and managers need to be trained to inclusively lead and mentor disabled employees. The leaders may need to develop and understand communication styles that help them engage with disabled employees better. This may, in turn, require consistent and involved managerial training and workshops to achieve the desired outcome.

### **6. Focus on Health and Well-being**

Employee health and well-being need to be of foremost priority, especially at disabled-friendly workplaces. Games, physical activities, and other recreational options can be encouraged in your company. Gyms, relaxation rooms and even sleeping pods are becoming common at workplaces.

You can also follow a policy of random drug testing at workplace to discourage the use of certain drugs. Bulk drug test kits have made the process more cost-effective and practical for companies.

Another option you can consider is including families and caregivers of disabled employees in your awareness initiatives and pre-hiring training sessions. This makes it easier for disabled employees to get used to their new roles.

As a socially responsible university USTM has continuously implemented its disability-related policies which are as under:

- **Scholarships & Free ships:** Provision of financial support through Scholarships, Free ships and Exemptions of the tuition and accommodation fees are provided for differently abled students who wants to pursue higher education at USTM.
- Study programs under “I WILL I CAN ACADEMY” are flexible and by organizing the process of studies can be adapted to the needs of the person with disability.
- The university provides students with disability learning / educational tools and devices so they could use these material for their studies
- Provide counselling to differently - abled students on the types of courses they could study at USTM.
- Ensure admission of as many differently-abled students as possible in all the programs.
- Types of assistive devices to be procured to assess the educational needs of differently abled students enrolled in the university.
- Infrastructure of the university is constantly being built, reconstructed, adjusted and adapted to the needs of students with physical disabilities.
- All existing structures as well as future construction projects in the campus are to be made disabled friendly.
- Conduct awareness programmes for faculties of the university about the approaches to teaching, evaluation procedures, etc, which they should address in the case of differently-abled students.
- Study the aptitude of differently-abled students and assist them in getting appropriate employment when desired by them after their studies.
- Celebrate important days pertaining to disability such as the World Disabled Day, White Cane Day, etc., in the University and also in the neighbourhood in order to create awareness about the capabilities of differently-abled persons.

At USTM student with disability will always be heard and understood. He or she will always be able to participate and contribute to the process of making comfortable conditions for learning, studying and living.



**Facilities:**

Facilities such as **ramps**, **rails** and **special toilets**, Signage including tactil Path, Lights, Display Boards & Signposts to be made available.

Special Facilities like assistive technology, provision for enquiry & information, Human Assistance, reader, scribe, soft copies of reading material and screen reading along with other necessary facilities to suit the special needs of differently-abled persons are to be created.

**Hostel Building:**

In Future special hostel building will be established only for Divyangjan.

**Campus Movement:**

For hassle free movement inside the campus green vehicle facility has been launched.

**Employability:**

The management of the university has taken plan to provide necessary skill based training to make them employable with the help of other organization.

**Contact:**

For any clarification and Details, Registrar/Director Welfare, USTM may be contacted.

## Campus

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