

Section 1
General Provisions

1. Short Title

This policy shall be known as the **University Policy for Equitable Access to Outreach Programs and Extension Activities**.

2. Declaration of Policy

The University is committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment in all of its outreach programs and extension activities. The University recognizes the importance of providing equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, or any other characteristic. This policy aims to:

- a) Ensure that all outreach programs and extension activities are accessible to everyone, regardless of background or identity.
- b) Identify and eliminate barriers that prevent marginalized or underrepresented groups from participating in outreach programs.
- c) Promote awareness, understanding, and active engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion within the University's outreach efforts.
- d) Design, implement, and evaluate outreach activities through an inclusive lens, ensuring that access is not limited by any characteristic.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all individuals have equitable access to the University's outreach programs and extension activities. By implementing this policy, the University aims to:

- a) Address and reduce disparities in participation based on ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, or any other social determinant.
- b) Establish a transparent and consistent approach for ensuring inclusive access to all University-run outreach programs and activities.
- c) Engage students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders in creating a more inclusive and accessible community.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all outreach programs, extension activities, and community engagement initiatives organized by the University, including, but not limited to:

- a) Educational and training programs.
- b) Public lectures, workshops, seminars, and conferences.
- c) Community engagement projects, volunteering opportunities, and events.
- d) Research outreach, fieldwork, and citizen science initiatives.

e) Services, resources, and programs designed to support or enhance community involvement.

5. Principles of Access and Inclusion

To ensure equitable access to all outreach programs and extension activities, the following principles shall be adhered to:

a) Non-Discrimination: All outreach programs and activities will be accessible to all, irrespective of race, religion, gender, disability, or other personal characteristics.

b) Universal Design: Outreach programs will be developed with the principles of universal design to ensure that they are inclusive of individuals with diverse needs, including physical, digital, and cognitive accessibility.

c) Cultural Competence: Program staff will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand, respect, and incorporate diverse cultural perspectives, needs, and practices.

d) Transparency and Communication: Information about available programs will be disseminated widely and clearly, ensuring that all community members are aware of opportunities to participate, especially those from marginalized groups.

Section 2

Definition of Terms Used in the Policy

1. Outreach Programs

Structured initiatives by the University designed to engage the broader community through educational, research, service, or engagement opportunities, both on-campus and off-campus.

2. Extension Activities

Educational, advisory, or service-related initiatives that extend knowledge, expertise, and resources from the University to the community, often outside formal academic settings.

3. Discrimination

Any practice, policy, or behavior that unjustly denies equal access to opportunities or resources based on characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, immigration status, or other protected categories.

4. Inclusion

The active process of creating environments where all individuals, regardless of their identity, are welcomed, valued, and supported to participate meaningfully in all aspects of university life and outreach.

5. Accessibility

The design of programs, services, and facilities in ways that enable individuals with disabilities, language barriers, or other specific needs to fully participate in activities, including physical, digital, and communication aspects.

6. Marginalized Groups

Communities or individuals who face social, economic, or political disadvantages due to factors such as race, religion, disability, gender, immigration status, or other characteristics, and are at risk of being excluded from mainstream opportunities.

7. Accommodations

Adjustments or modifications made to ensure that individuals with specific needs—such as those with disabilities—can equally access and participate in outreach programs and activities. Examples include sign language interpreters, captioned materials, or physical access adjustments.

8. Cultural Sensitivity

The ability to recognize, understand, and respect cultural differences, and to adjust program delivery to ensure that diverse cultural values and practices are acknowledged and respected.

Section 3

Institutional Mechanism for Ensuring Access and Inclusion

1. Center for Community Development and Extension Services Committee

The University shall establish a Center for Community Development and Extension Services Committee to oversee the implementation and continuous improvement of this policy. The committee will include representatives from key departments such as Center for Student Leadership and Development and University Student Council, and will work closely with External Affairs and Linkages to ensure outreach efforts are inclusive and accessible.

2. Responsibilities of the Committee

The Center for Community Development and Extension Services Committee will:

- a) Ensure that all outreach programs and extension activities are designed with inclusivity as a core principle.
- b) Regularly monitor, assess, and report on the participation of diverse groups in outreach programs, particularly focusing on marginalized and underserved populations.
- c) Collaborate with other academic and administrative units to identify and address systemic barriers that hinder participation in outreach programs.
- d) Provide guidance, best practices, and resources to University staff and faculty to enhance inclusivity in outreach efforts.

3. External Affairs and Linkages Committee

The External Affairs and Linkages will be responsible for:

- a) Coordinating with the Center for Community Development and Extension Services to ensure that outreach programs and extension activities are designed, implemented, and evaluated with inclusivity and accessibility in mind.
- b) Developing partnerships with external organizations, local communities, and other stakeholders to expand access to University programs and promote diversity in outreach.
- c) Supporting the Center for Community Development and Extension Services Committee by advising on strategies to engage diverse communities and ensure that their needs are addressed in outreach activities.
- d) Building awareness and disseminating best practices for outreach activities that are culturally competent and equitable.

4. Center for Student Leadership and Development

The Center for Student Leadership and Development will be responsible for:

- a) Facilitating the involvement of students in the planning and implementation of outreach programs, ensuring that their perspectives and needs are considered.
- b) Collaborating with the Center to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach programs in reaching diverse populations and identify areas for improvement.
- c) Establishing a feedback mechanism for students to share their experiences and suggestions regarding outreach activities, contributing to a continuous improvement process.

5. University Student Council

The University Student Council will be responsible for:

- a) Encouraging student participation in volunteer activities that benefit the community, fostering a sense of social responsibility.
- b) Promoting awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion through campaigns and workshops.
- c) Educating students about cultural competency and sensitivity, fostering respectful interactions with diverse populations.
- d) Collecting feedback from students on outreach programs and activities, identifying areas for improvement.
- e) Participating in the evaluation of outreach initiatives to assess their impact and make recommendations for future improvements.

Section 4

Institutional Program for Ensuring Access and Inclusion

1. Program Accessibility Audit

The University will conduct periodic accessibility audits of all outreach programs and extension activities to assess their inclusivity. These audits will address factors such as physical accessibility, the availability of accommodations, language access, and digital accessibility.

2. Staff Training Program

All staff and volunteers involved in outreach programs will undergo mandatory training on:

- a) Principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- b) Best practices for engaging diverse communities and overcoming barriers to participation.
- c) Methods for providing reasonable accommodations to ensure that individuals with specific needs can participate fully.

3. Community Engagement and Feedback

The University will establish a feedback mechanism that allows participants to share their experiences regarding the accessibility and inclusivity of outreach programs. Feedback will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure continuous improvements in program design and delivery.

4. Targeted Outreach to Underrepresented Groups

The University will make specific efforts to reach communities that may be underrepresented or face barriers to participation in outreach programs, such as:

- a) Immigrant and refugee communities.
- b) People with disabilities.
- c) Low-income and economically disadvantaged groups.
- d) Other historically marginalized or underserved populations.

Section 5

Incentives, Rewards, Recognition, and Enforcement

1. Incentives for Inclusivity

The University will offer incentives to faculty, staff, and students who demonstrate a significant commitment to making outreach programs more accessible and inclusive. These incentives may include:

- a) Recognition in University newsletters, on the website, or at public events.
- b) Financial support, such as awards or grants, for the development of inclusive outreach programs.

2. Rewards for Best Practices

Departments or units that excel in promoting access and inclusion in their outreach activities will receive formal recognition, including:

- a) Public acknowledgment at University events, such as annual celebrations or commencements.

- b) Certification or a seal of approval indicating their commitment to inclusivity in outreach programming.

3. Enforcement of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy will result in the following consequences:

- a) A review of non-compliant programs and recommendations for corrective actions, including re-designing or adapting programs to meet inclusivity standards.
- b) Suspension or modification of programs that fail to adhere to the policy's principles of access and inclusion.
- c) Disciplinary action against staff or faculty who violate the University's inclusivity standards, which may include mandatory retraining or other corrective measures.

Section 6

Miscellaneous Provisions

1. Research and Technology

The University will invest in research and innovative technologies to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of outreach programs, including:

- a) Development of virtual platforms and online resources that are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- b) Data analytics tools to monitor and measure the diversity of participants in outreach activities and identify areas for improvement.

2. Public Education and Awareness

The University will promote public awareness about the importance of equitable access and inclusion in outreach efforts through:

- a) Hosting seminars, workshops, and webinars focused on diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- b) Distributing materials that promote an understanding of diversity and inclusion within the University community.

3. Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure its effectiveness in addressing the evolving needs of the University community. The review process will involve consultation with key stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, and community partners.

Section 7

Reference to Standards for Access and Inclusion

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

An international human rights treaty aimed at ensuring the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

2. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A U.S. law that mandates equal access to public services, employment, and education for individuals with disabilities, promoting full societal participation.

3. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

An educational framework for creating learning environments that are accessible to all learners, particularly those with diverse learning needs.

4. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities)

Promotes the reduction of inequality within and among countries, with a focus on ensuring equal access to education, economic opportunity, and social participation.

Prepared by:

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