



SIKKIM ALPINE UNIVERSITY

Kamrang, Namchi, South Sikkim – 737126

(Established under Sikkim Alpine University Act, 2021)

DIVYANG CELL POLICY

(Policy Document – 2025)

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DIVYANG CELL POLICY

Sikkim Alpine University

Kamrang, Namchi

Sikkim

1. Preamble

Sikkim Alpine University (hereinafter “the University”) is committed to creating an inclusive, barrier-free, and enabling campus for persons with disabilities (Divyang). This Divyang Cell Policy (hereinafter “Policy”) establishes the institutional framework, processes, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms by which the University will ensure equal access to education, employment, facilities and participation for Divyang students, staff, faculty and visitors.

This Policy is guided by national and international standards, including the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 and Rules thereunder, Government of India accessibility initiatives (Accessible India Campaign), University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) guidelines on inclusive education, and best practices in higher education inclusion.

2. Definitions

Divyang / Person with Disability (PwD): Person who has long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. For the purposes of University implementation, disability categories will align with RPwD Act definitions and latest notified guidelines for assessment and percentage determinations.

Divyang Cell (Cell): The University’s dedicated office/committee responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring services, accommodations, grievance redressal and policies for PwDs.

- a) Reasonable Accommodation: Modifications and adjustments that do not impose undue burden but are necessary to ensure equal access and participation.
- b) Scribe/Reader/Assistive Person: Trained person appointed to assist a student with disability during examinations as per Section 17 of RPwD Act and University SOPs.
- c) UDID/Disability Certificate: Government-issued unique disability identification or disability certificate used to validate disability status and percentage.

2. Legal and Policy Framework

The University will implement this Policy in alignment with:

- a) Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 and Rules notified thereafter.
- b) Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) guidelines on inclusive education and examination accommodations.
- c) Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat) standards for built environment, ICT and transport accessibility.
- d) RCI, UGC and AICTE guidelines and circulars on inclusion, reasonable accommodation, reservation, and accessible infrastructure.
- e) National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 direction for inclusion and equitable access.

3. Objectives

- a) Create an institutional structure (Divyang Cell) to oversee and coordinate all disability-inclusive actions.
- b) Ensure access to admission, curriculum, examinations, facilities, employment, and campus life for Divyang persons.
- c) Provide reasonable accommodations and assistive technologies tailored to individual needs.
- d) Proactively remove physical, digital and attitudinal barriers across the campus.
- e) Build capacity of faculty, staff and peer community to support inclusion.
- f) Establish grievance redressal, monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement mechanisms.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all Divyang applicants, students (undergraduate, postgraduate, research), faculty, contract and permanent staff, and visitors to university campuses and affiliated constituent units under the administrative control of Sikkim Alpine University.

5. Divyang Cell: Structure and Governance

5.1 Establishment

The University will establish a Divyang Cell reporting to the Registrar and the Vice Chancellor with the following components:

Divyang Cell Coordinator (DCC): A senior staff member (preferably with experience in special/inclusive education, disability services or social work) appointed full-time/part-time to manage daily operations.

Divyang Advisory Committee (DAC): A standing committee chaired by a senior academic (Dean/Director) comprising:

- a) DCC (Member-Secretary)
- b) Representative of Office of the Registrar
- c) Faculty representatives from Education, Social Work, Rehabilitation Sciences/Allied departments
- d) Physical Plant/Works Department representative
- e) Student representative(s), including at least one Divyang student
- f) Counselling and Mental Health Services representative
- g) HR/Administration representative
- h) Legal/Compliance officer
- i) External expert (from local disability organization/NGO) — invited member

5.2 Mandate & Responsibilities:

The Divyang Cell will:

- a) Maintain centralized records of Divyang students and staff (with consent) and their accommodation needs.
- b) Conduct barrier audits (built, curriculum, ICT) and prepare an Accessibility Action Plan.
- c) Manage intake, verification and facilitation of reasonable accommodations for admissions, teaching and examinations.
- d) Coordinate assistive technology procurement, loans and maintenance.
- e) Train and sensitize faculty, staff and students and conduct annual awareness campaigns.
- f) Coordinate with affiliated departments, hostels, transport and exam cell for inclusive arrangements.
- g) Provide guidance and SOPs for scribes, sign-language interpreters, readers and exam accommodations.
- h) Handle grievance registration, investigation and redressal related to disability inclusion.
- i) Prepare annual accessibility and inclusion reports and KPIs for the University Executive.

6. Registration, Documentation & Confidentiality:

6.1 Registration:

Any student or staff member who identifies as Divyang may register with the Divyang Cell by submitting:

- a) A copy of the Government-issued Disability Certificate / UDID or authenticated medical/psychological assessment as per latest notified guidelines.
- b) A completed *Divyang Registration & Needs Assessment Form* (Annexure A).
- c) In cases where a certificate is pending, provisional accommodations may be provided upon submission of interim medical documentation; finalization will

occur after receipt of official documentation.

6.2 Confidentiality:

- a) All medical and disability-related records will be stored securely by the Divyang Cell.
- b) Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis with consent of the individual (e.g., exam cell for accommodations, HR for workplace adjustments).
- c) The University will comply with applicable data protection/privacy norms.

1. Assessment of Needs & Individualized Accommodation Plan (IAP):

- a) Upon registration, the DCC along with a multi-disciplinary panel (if needed) will conduct a Needs Assessment to determine the functional limitations, assistive technology needs, exam accommodations and campus support.
- b) An Individualized Accommodation Plan (IAP)* will be produced for each registered person specifying:
 - c) Nature and percentage of disability as per certificate
 - d) Academic/course-specific accommodations (e.g., extended time, scribe, modified formats)
 - e) Assistive devices / software required
 - f) Hostel/transport/accommodation needs
 - g) Any safety/health accommodations
 - h) Review timeline (minimum annually or upon change of circumstances)

2. Admissions, Reservation & Outreach:

8.1 Admissions:

- a) The University will ensure admission processes (applications, prospectus, entrance exams, interviews) are accessible and include clear guidance on how candidates can request accommodations.
- b) Where entrance tests are conducted by the University, reasonable modifications (extra time, scribe, alternate formats) will be provided in accordance with the IAP and RPwD provisions.

8.2 Reservation:

- a) The University will follow statutory reservation provisions for persons with disabilities in admissions and recruitment as per central/state rules and University ordinances.
- b) Where statutory reservation is absent, the University will proactively allocate seats/benchmarks to promote inclusion consistent with NEP and institutional commitment.

8.3 Outreach & Outreach Materials:

- a) Prospectuses, websites and outreach materials will be made available in accessible

formats (tagged PDFs, large print, plain-language summaries, screen-reader compatible content) and include contact details for the Divyang Cell.

3. Examinations, Evaluation and Assessment:

9.1 Examination Accommodations:

- a) The University recognizes statutory examination accommodations (e.g., up to 20–40% extra time depending on disability and functional assessment, use of scribe/reader, modified question papers, oral examinations, assistive devices) and will implement them per IAP and in compliance with Section 17 of the RPwD Act and DEPwD guidelines.
- b) Requests for scribes/assistants should be submitted at least 15 working days before the examination along with supporting documentation. The Divyang Cell will maintain a roster of trained scribes/readers and ensure impartial allocation.
- c) Confidentiality and fairness: scribes/readers will sign an undertaking of confidentiality and non- involvement in academic evaluation beyond assisting in recording responses.

9.2 Continuous & Practical Assessments:

- a) Reasonable accommodations will be provided during laboratory work, practical examinations, fieldwork and internships (e.g., additional time, adapted equipment, alternative assignments where essential learning outcomes can be met).

9.3 Internal & External Examiners:

- a) Examination committees and external examiners will be informed (with consent) of accommodations. Where required, the Divyang Cell will provision specially-invigilated rooms and assistive supervision.

10. Infrastructure & Built Environment Accessibility:

10.1 Barrier Audit:

- a) The Divyang Cell and Works Department will conduct a campus-wide barrier audit within 6 months of policy adoption and then annually. Audits will cover: entrances, ramps, lifts, tactile pathways, toilet facilities, signage, lecture halls, hostels, canteens and sports facilities.

10.2 Remediation Plan:

- a) The University will prepare an Accessibility Action Plan with prioritized works, budget estimates and timelines. Emergency exits, accessible routes and accessible restrooms will be prioritized.

10.3 Design & New Constructions:

- a) All new buildings and renovations will comply with national accessibility standards

and University- accessible design checklists (Refer Annexure B: Minimum Accessibility Specifications).

11. ICT, Digital & Library Accessibility:

- a) University websites, learning management systems (LMS), digital repositories and e-resources will adhere to recognized accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1 Level AA) to the extent feasible.
- b) Library services will include accessible catalogues, audio-books, large-print books, scanning-to- text services and staff trained to assist users with disabilities.
- c) Software purchases will factor in compatibility with assistive technologies (screen-readers, magnifiers, speech-to-text).

12. Assistive Technology, Loan Pool & Budgeting:

- a) The University will develop an Assistive Technology (AT) Loan Pool consisting of wheelchairs, laptops with screen readers, Braille displays, magnifiers, FM systems, hearing aid accessories, adaptive keyboards and software licenses.
- b) The annual University budget will allocate a dedicated fund for Divyang inclusion (capital & recurring) to support infrastructure, AT procurement, training, and accessibility remediation.

13. Hostel, Transport & Campus Life:

- a) University hostels will have a proportion of accessible rooms and adapted facilities for mobility- impaired, sensory-impaired and other disabled students.
- b) Campus transport services (shuttle buses) will have at least one accessible vehicle and route scheduling that considers location of accessible hostels and classrooms.
- c) Sports, cultural and extra-curricular activities will proactively include adapted options and encourage participation of Divyang students.

14. Recruitment, Employment & Career Support:

- a) Divyang persons will be encouraged in recruitment for faculty/staff roles; reasonable workplace accommodations will be provided in consultation with HR and the Divyang Cell.
- b) The University will follow reservation rules, and provide workplace accessibility, flexible work arrangements and assistive technologies as required.
- c) Career counselling and placement cells will offer dedicated support to Divyang students and liaise with employers to arrange reasonable workplace accommodations and sensitization.

15. Capacity Building & Sensitization:

- a) Annual mandatory orientation for all new staff and new students will include a module on disability rights, inclusive practices and the University's Divyang Cell services.
- b) The University will organize periodic training for faculty on inclusive pedagogy (universal design for learning), assessment adaptations and use of assistive technologies.
- c) Peer-mentoring programs will be encouraged and small grants for faculty to redesign course materials into accessible formats will be made available.

16. Grievance Redressal & Accessibility Complaints:

16.1 Complaints Mechanism:

- a) The Divyang Cell will be the first point of contact for accessibility-related grievances. A standardized complaint form (Annexure C) and an online portal/email contact will be maintained.
- b) The DAC will investigate grievances within 15 working days and issue decisions; complex matters may be escalated to the University Grievance Redressal Committee.

16.2 Appeals:

- a) Where complainants disagree with the DAC decision, they may appeal to the Vice Chancellor's Office within 30 days. External statutory remedies are also available under the RPwD Act.

17. Monitoring, Reporting & KPIs:

17.1 Monitoring:

- a) The Divyang Cell shall prepare a quarterly operational report and an annual Accessibility & Inclusion Report for presentation to the University Executive and Governing Council.

a. Key Performance Indicators:

- a) Number of registered Divyang students and staff and percent increase year-on-year.
- b) Number of accommodations granted and average processing time.
- c) Percent of campus buildings audited and percent remediated.
- d) Number of faculty trained in inclusive pedagogy annually.
- e) Student satisfaction score (survey) among Divyang students.

18. Documentation, Record Keeping & Annual Review:

- a) The Divyang Cell will maintain records of registrations, IAPs, grievance cases, barrier audits, procurement logs and training attendance. These will be retained as

per university record retention policies.

- b) The Policy will be reviewed biennially by the DAC to incorporate changes in law, technology and best practice.

19. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) **Vice Chancellor / University Executive:** Endorsement, strategic oversight, budget approval.
- b) **Registrar:** Administrative oversight and coordination across departments.
- c) **Divyang Cell Coordinator:** Day-to-day implementation, case management, reporting.
- d) **Works Department / Estate:** Implement physical access improvements.
- e) **Examination Cell:** Implement examination accommodations and maintain confidentiality.
- f) **HR:** Implement workplace accommodations and recruitment adjustments.
- g) **Faculty:** Provide inclusive instruction and participate in training.
- h) **Students & Student Affairs:** Peer support and inclusive student activities.

20. Funding and Resources

- a) The University shall allocate a recurring annual corpus for Divyang inclusion covering AT procurement, building remediation, staffing of the Divyang Cell, training programs and minor capital works.
- b) The University will seek external funding (state social welfare, central grants, CSR, philanthropic partnerships) for major projects.

21. Implementation Plan (first 12 months)

Month 0–3

- a) Establish Divyang Cell, appoint Coordinator and DAC members.
- b) Launch Divyang registration drive; create forms and web guidance.
- c) Begin campus-wide barrier audit.

Month 4–6

- a) Publish IAP templates and SOP for examination accommodations (scribe, extra time, assistive tech).
- b) Procure priority AT items and establish loan pool.
- c) Conduct first sensitization workshops for faculty and student leaders.

Month 7–12

- a) Start prioritized remediation works (ramps, signage, accessible restrooms).
- b) Integrate accessibility checks into procurement and new-construction approvals.
- c) Publish first quarterly report and baseline KPIs; adjust plan based on findings.

22. Annexures (forms, SOPs & checklists):

- a) Annexure A: Divyang Registration & Needs Assessment Form (template)
- b) Annexure B: Minimum Accessibility Specifications & Design Checklist (built environment)
- c) Annexure C: Accessibility Grievance Form (template)
- d) Annexure D: SOP — Examination Scribe / Reader Procedures
- e) Annexure E: Barrier Audit Checklist (buildings & campus)
- f) Annexure F: Sample Individualized Accommodation Plan (IAP) template
- g) Annexure G: Annual Accessibility & Inclusion Report Template

(Annexures to be attached as operational templates and updated by the Divyang Cell.)

23. Sample SOP excerpt – Scribe/Reader

- a) **Eligibility:** Student must be registered with Divyang Cell and have documented need in IAP.
- b) **Request timeline:** Application at least 15 working days prior to exam.
- c) **Selection:** Divyang Cell will appoint impartial, trained scribes and ensure no conflict of interest.
- d) **Training & Confidentiality:** Scribes sign confidentiality agreement and receive brief training on impartiality and exam norms.
- e) **Examination conduct:** Exams will be held in a suitable, accessible room; scribe records verbatim answers; time allowances applied per IAP.
- f) **Recordkeeping:** Scribe name and declaration retained by Divyang Cell for audit.

24. Closing statement

Sikkim Alpine University affirms its commitment to an equitable campus where Divyang persons are respected, empowered and supported. This Policy is a living document of the Divyang Cell will update operational procedures and annexures as technology, legislation and best practice evolve.