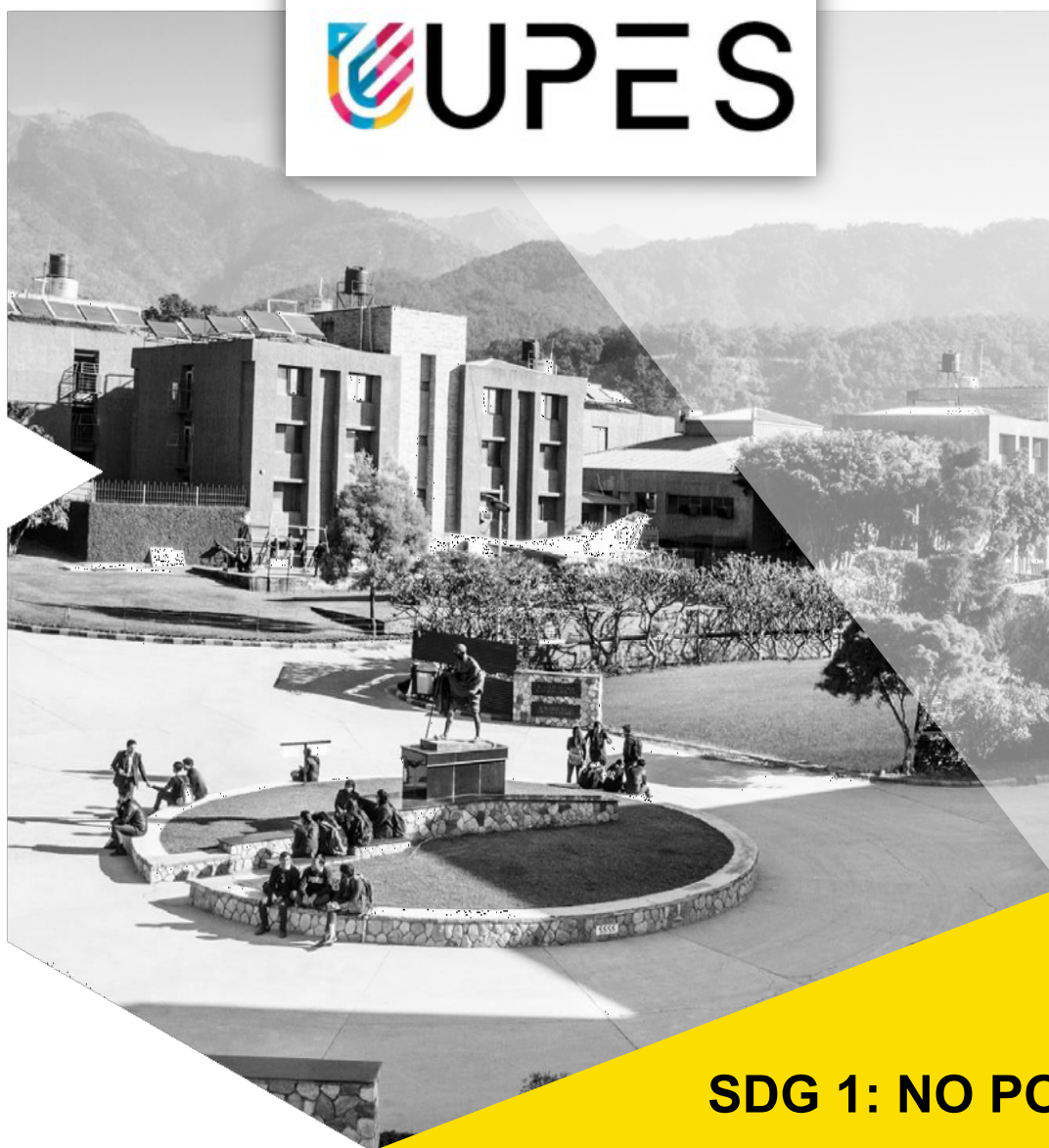




SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG 1: NO POVERTY

2025

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1.3.2 Does your university as a body have graduation/completion targets for students who fall into the bottom 20% of household income group in the country?

UPES's Support for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Financial Aid and Scholarships

UPES has a strong focus on making education accessible to students from economically weaker sections. In the 2023-24 academic year, UPES disbursed about **₹46 crore in scholarships to 6,844 students**, benefitting more than half of its student body [1]. These scholarships include need-based awards targeted at underprivileged students. Notably, the flagship **Jyoti Scholarship (Freeship)** is a merit-cum-need program providing **100% tuition and academic fee waivers** for high-achieving students from low-income families [1]. Key features of this scheme include:

- **Eligibility:** For families with annual income \leq **₹8 lakh** (approx. bottom quintile by national standards) [1]. Both **undergraduate and postgraduate** applicants are eligible (upper age limits 20 for UG, 25 for PG) [1].
- **Seats and Coverage:** **51 full-freeship seats** are available each year on a merit basis [1]. Selected students receive a **100% scholarship** covering tuition and academic fees for the first year, renewable based on performance.
- **Renewal Criteria:** To continue receiving the freeship, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress (e.g. ≥ 6.0 GPA with all subjects passed), good conduct, and submit updated income proofs annually [1]. This ensures scholarship recipients are supported through to completion *provided they stay on track academically*.

Inclusivity Mission

Through such initiatives, UPES signals its commitment to **“quality education for all”**. The university explicitly states that deserving students *“regardless of their financial status”* should have access to higher education [2], helping to break the cycle of poverty. These need-based scholarships (alongside merit scholarships and other aids) are part of an **inclusive policy** to uplift students from economically challenged backgrounds [2]. Moreover, UPES offers additional support like *“Student Financial Support”* schemes and discounts for special categories (e.g. domicile scholarships, etc.), which indirectly benefit low-income groups [1]. (Note: UPES's **Jyoti Freeship** does not cover hostel accommodation by default [1], so financial support is focused mainly on academic expenses.)

Current Graduation/Completion Targets at UPES

UPES's approach has been to focus on *enabling access* (through scholarships) and ensuring those admitted can continue their studies. By providing full financial support to EWS students and requiring them to meet academic standards for renewal [1], the university effectively encourages high

completion rates among those it aids. The implicit goal is that any student admitted under these schemes will be able to **complete their program without financial barriers**. UPES's **merit scholarships** and academic performance tracking (awarding top-performing students each year [2]) further incentivize students – including those from low-income backgrounds – to persist and graduate on time.

In summary, the university's commitment is reflected through substantial financial aid and supportive policies.

Capability Enhancement and Development Schemes

<https://www.upes.ac.in/capability-enhancement-and-development-schemes> [3]

UPES has a stellar Career Services department that not only provides exemplary services and prepares students for competitive examinations but also provides sector leadership in employability development through their training vertical, EDGE (Enhanced Development Growth & Enrichment). Activities such as discussions, blogging, personality profiling, competency mapping, domain knowledge tests, aptitude testing and job posting communication, that provide opportunities for career planning and skill enhancement for sustainable student outcomes, are also arranged.

Employability Boot camps

The vision of the Employability Boot camp (EB) is to launch students' careers with work readiness workshops to improve employability prospects. Collaboration with the industry experts and alumni offers students access to real-world job recruitment processes, helps them understand the corporate scenario and manages their aspirations and job expectations. Students are empowered through workshops on resume building, writing job applications and cover letters and skills to clear the recruitment process. It prepares them to understand and accept constructive feedback on where to improve and how to forge their path in their careers.

- Employability Boot Camps help students build confidence and make a seamless transition from the campus to the corporate world.
- Students are able to identify their core strengths and communicate to employers the ways to unlock their true potential.
- They rediscover that their passion for their domain will impact the world.
- Students connect with alumni to clear their doubts and dilemmas about the upcoming placement season.

Career Counselling

EDGE community page on UPES Learning Management System acts as a social tool for scheduling appointments for seeking personal career coaching and counselling. The goal of this approach is to develop new means of reaching out to and supporting the student community for a higher level of career adaptability in students and enhancing their employability skills.

Soft Skill development through PEP & PSI

Personality Enhancement Program (PEP) is a flagship event of the Department of Humanities. It is organized in collaboration with Dale Carnegie. The three-day event is aimed at facilitating the transition for undergraduate and post-graduate students at two levels – transition from school to college and transition from college to industry. The experiential-based learning is focused on three skills, i.e., behavioural skills, people skills and presentation skills. These skills are honed via a series of engaging activities where a trainer is assigned to the batch in the capacity of a facilitator and a coach

Placement Selection Improvement (PSI) program intends to groom students for better placement opportunities and enhance their employability prospects. Its goals are to:

- Inculcate confidence in students through practical learning
- Make them experience real interview situations
- Make them industry-ready professionals
- Make them aware of their shortcomings in PI by sharing real-time feedback

PSI helps students to understand and analyze their actual value in the market. They get an opportunity to be exposed to various situations that require immediate attention. It enables them to prepare in the areas which otherwise impede their chances of better placements. Subject matter experts help them to uncover the gap in the current level of technical competencies from the expected ones.

Personal Counseling - We at UPES have a well-developed team of professionals offering empathetic hands to lift students out of the pit of ambiguities, disappointments, confusion, and depression. Our full-time psychological counsellor adopts a holistic approach and factors in all aspects of a student's life while providing group and one-to-one counselling. Difficulties in academics and learning are dealt with through faculty mentors. UPES is among one of the few universities that understand the student's need for a friend, guide, role model and mentor. The department of Student Engagement and Experience works closely with students to ensure a wide range of initiatives and activities for engaging them throughout the academic year.

List of students attended counselling sessions

Remedial Coaching - Considering the importance of supporting the students to overcome their learning difficulties and gain confidence and interest in learning, remedial classes are planned and organized each year.

The remedial classes are therefore conducted for the students whose performance is not up to the mark, i.e., for the students who secure less than 40% marks in the Mid-Term Examination.

These classes help the weak students to fill the gaps in the teaching-learning process which may be due to their slow learning pace, lack of understanding, lack of motivation, etc. and ultimately enhance their learning and skills, resulting in improvement in their performance.

Yoga & Meditation - UPES lays emphasis on both the physical and mental health of its students. Located in the lap of nature, the beautiful serene campus offers a conducive atmosphere for the students to relax. We provide ample opportunities to the students to explore new ways of keeping fit

and healthy. We believe that yoga and meditation are the perfect activities to foster physical and emotional calmness and well-being. Yoga and meditation classes at UPES have proven effective in improving confidence, concentration and memory, besides ensuring optimum physical health.

Remedial Coaching

<https://www.upes.ac.in/student-space/student-support#:~:text=Remedial%20Coaching&text=These%20classes%20help%20the%20slow,to%20practice%20the%20problems%20etc> [4].

Understanding the importance of supporting the students to overcome their learning difficulties and gain confidence and interest in learning, remedial classes are planned and organized each year.

The remedial classes are therefore conducted for the students whose performance is not up to the mark i.e. for the students who secure less than 40% marks in Mid-Term Examination.

These classes help the slow learners to fill the gaps in the teaching learning process which may be due to their slow learning pace, lack of understanding, lack of motivation to practice the problems etc. and ultimately enhance their learnings and skills, resulting in improvement in their performance.

Best Practices from Top Universities Worldwide

Leading universities that excel in social impact often set **clear targets and supportive programs** for low-income student success. Here are examples of how high-performing institutions address this, aligning with THE Impact Ranking criteria:

- **Arizona State University (USA):** ASU has established a bold target to **triple the number of low-income graduates** over the next decade. It aims to **graduate 35,000 low-income students per year by 2035**, up from a baseline of ~10,500 currently [5]. This target is part of ASU's mission to mirror the socioeconomic diversity of its state in its student body while achieving "*undifferentiated outcomes for success*" [5] – meaning low-income students should graduate at the same rate as others. Such a large-scale numeric goal, combined with aggressive outreach (identifying Pell-eligible students) and support services, drives institutional efforts to improve accessibility and completion.
- **Universidad de Manila (Philippines):** UDM directly links its targets to SDG1. For the 2023-24 year, it set a **90% graduation rate target for students from the bottom 20% of household income** [6]. In practice, this means 9 out of 10 low-income students who meet academic requirements should successfully earn their diplomas. This ambitious goal is backed by comprehensive support – UDM provides **free tuition (matriculation), financial aid, and various support programs** to ensure disadvantaged students can **complete their degrees** [6]. The university frames graduation as "*a pathway out of poverty*," underlining that simply admitting low-income students is not enough without seeing them through to graduation [6].
- **Üsküdar University (Turkey):** Üsküdar uses a *parity target* approach. The university's strategy is to **align the graduation rate of low-income students with the overall student graduation rate**. For example, as of 2023 its general undergraduate completion rate is 82%, so it explicitly set **82% as the graduation target for lower-income undergraduates** (and 78% for associate-

degree students, matching the overall rate for that segment) [7]. The idea is to eliminate any achievement gap – lower-income students should graduate **at least at the same rate** as their peers. To reach this, Üsküdar offers extensive institutional support (scholarships, part-time work, transport aid, counseling, health services, etc.) so that financial hardship does not impede completion [7]. This approach highlights equity: success is measured by equal outcomes rather than just equal opportunities at entry.

- **University of Liverpool (UK):** Many UK universities set formal **gap-reduction targets** as part of their access and participation plans. For instance, the University of Liverpool aims to **shrink the completion rate gap** between its most advantaged and most disadvantaged students. It set a goal to reduce the degree **completion gap between lowest-income (IMD Quintile 1) and highest-income (Quintile 5) students from 6.1% (for 2017/18 cohort) down to 4.0% by 2028/29** [8]. In practice, this means raising the success rates of low-income students to nearly equal that of high-income students over time. Achieving this involves targeted academic support, mentoring, financial aid, and regular monitoring of progression for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Such targeted improvement plans are closely tracked and publicly reported, ensuring accountability.

These examples illustrate that top institutions not only implement support programs but also **quantify their goals** – whether by absolute numbers of graduates, percentage rates, or closing gaps – and tie them to strategic timelines. Crucially, they also **publicize these targets and outcomes**, which helps in sharing accountability and earning recognition (including points in rankings) [9].

Recommendations for UPES

To strengthen its performance in **THE Impact Rankings** and further improve educational equity, UPES can adopt the following best practices:

1. **Establish Clear Graduation Targets:** Formally set a **completion rate target for students from the bottom 20% income group** at UPES (covering both undergraduate and postgraduate levels). For example, UPES could aim that *“at least 90% of all economically disadvantaged students complete their degrees”* or set the target to **match the overall university graduation rate** (ensuring no gap). Having a concrete goal (e.g. X% graduation within Y years for EWS students) will focus institutional efforts and can be showcased as a commitment to student success, similar to UDM’s 90% target [6] or Üsküdar’s parity target of 82% [7].
2. **Expand Support Programs to Achieve the Targets:** Meeting ambitious targets will require robust support. UPES should continue and expand initiatives that directly assist low-income students *through to graduation*. This may include:
 - **Financial Support Beyond Tuition:** Consider offering subsidies for textbooks, accommodation, meals or transportation for needy students. (Top universities often address such basic needs – e.g. providing free dormitory or meal plans – to ensure financial difficulties outside tuition don’t derail students [6].)
 - **Academic and Mentoring Programs:** Implement mentoring, tutoring, or academic skill workshops for first-generation and low-income students. Early alert systems and additional counseling can help improve their academic performance and retention, closing any success gaps.

- **Work Opportunities and Emergency Aid:** Like Üsküdar's approach [7], UPES could offer on-campus part-time jobs or stipends for low-income students and maintain an emergency fund for unforeseen financial hardships. This comprehensive safety net helps students focus on studies and reach graduation.
3. **Set Separate UG and PG Objectives (if needed):** Recognize that undergraduate and postgraduate students may face different challenges. UPES can establish targets tailored to each level – for instance, ensure **undergraduate low-income student graduation rate** remains high (or improves to a specific figure), and similarly track **postgraduate completion** for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. If, say, the current overall UG graduation rate is (hypothetically) 85%, UPES could commit to ~85% or higher for EWS undergrads; for PG programs (which might have smaller cohorts), it could ensure near-100% completion by providing thesis/project support and financial aid extensions when necessary. Monitoring both UG and PG outcomes will give a full picture of success. Any identified gaps could then be addressed with level-specific interventions.
 4. **Monitor, Publish and Benchmark Outcomes:** To satisfy ranking criteria and internal goals, UPES should regularly **monitor the progress** of bottom-quintile-income students (their retention rates, graduation rates, time-to-degree, etc.). Just as importantly, **publish these findings and the university's targets publicly** – for example, in annual reports or on the UPES website. Transparent reporting (e.g. "**UPES achieved an X% graduation rate for EWS students in 2024, aiming for Y% by 2025**") not only provides evidence for the Impact Rankings submission but also builds trust with stakeholders. THE's methodology grants extra credit if such evidence is publicly available [9]. By comparing outcomes against the stated targets each year, UPES can benchmark itself against global leaders and continuously improve.

By implementing the above recommendations, **UPES can demonstrate a stronger institutional commitment to the success of its most financially vulnerable students**. This would align UPES with global best practices – from the U.S. and the U.K. to Asia – and likely boost its performance in the THE Impact Rankings. More importantly, it would ensure that students from the bottom 20% income group are not only admitted to UPES, but are fully supported to **graduate on time** and empowered to leverage their degrees to break the cycle of poverty. Such steps reinforce UPES's vision of inclusivity and excellence, positioning the university as a leader in promoting **equitable educational outcomes**.

Road-map for UPES to Achieve "Best-practice" Status – and a Top Grade – on THE Impact Rankings (SDG 1: No Poverty)

1 | Anchor a Formal, Public Target

1. **Define the cohort clearly** – adopt the Government of India's *Economically Weaker Section (EWS)* criterion (annual family income \leq ₹8 lakh) as the proxy for the *bottom-20 % household-income* group.
2. **Baseline & publish** – in September 2025 extract three years of student-records data to calculate current UG/PG graduation rates for all EWS / freeship / Jyoti scholars.
3. **Set a SMART target** – e.g. "**UPES will achieve a 90 % on-time graduation rate for EWS undergraduate students and a parity gap \leq 2 pp between EWS and non-EWS cohorts by 2030.**" This mirrors the numeric, time-bound goals that earn maximum credit for SDG 1 leaders such as the University of Liverpool (gap-reduction targets) and the University of Manchester (bottom-quintile participation & success goals) [8].

4. **Ratify at Board level** and place the target in a publicly accessible *Access & Success Charter* on the UPES website (Impact Rankings require the goal to be public) [9].

2 | Create an Access & Completion Plan (UG + PG)

Pillar	2025-26 actions	2026-27 → 2029-30 scale-ups	Reference
A. Guaranteed Cost Coverage	Extend <i>Jyoti</i> from tuition-only to <i>full cost of attendance</i> for the 75 lowest-income freshers (tuition + hostel + meals + books). Fund the hostel/meals component via CSR donors.	Increase full-ride seats to 200 by AY 2028-29; embed automatic renewal as long as SAP* is met.	UPES scholarships scope [1]
B. Emergency Aid Fund	Convert ₹50 k/semester bereavement concession into a needs-blind emergency grant pool (₹1 crore pilot fund). 24-hour e-form; approvals within 72 h.	Ring-fence 1 % of tuition income annually (~₹5-₹6 crore) for this fund; publish usage statistics.	UPES hardship scheme [2]
C. Academic Success Hub	Formalise the mentor model (1 mentor : 25 students) as an <i>EWS Success Programme</i> : mandatory monthly check-ins, early-alert analytics for low GPA, free remedial classes.	Add peer-to-peer EWS tutors (paid via work-study) and an <i>EWS Career Accelerator</i> (job-readiness bootcamp).	UPES mentoring system [10]
D. Learning-tech Equity	Launch a Laptop-Loan & Data-Voucher scheme (100 devices, 250 data packs in 2025-26) using CSR gifts – modelled on Manchester’s “Help Me Get Online”.	Expand to 500 devices by 2027; guarantee every EWS student has a personal device by end of first semester.	Manchester best practice [11]

*SAP = Satisfactory Academic Progress

3 | Embed Data-Driven Monitoring & Public Reporting

1. **Dashboards** – integrate EWS flags into the student-analytics platform; track semester-by-semester retention, GPA, and credit accumulation.
2. **Annual SDG 1 Report** – publish progress each July (targets vs. actuals, aid disbursed, completion rates). This transparency is explicitly rewarded in THE scoring rubric [9].
3. **Governance** – empower the Dean of Student Welfare as target owner; report quarterly to Academic Council.

4 | Strengthen Community & Pipeline Initiatives

Top-scoring institutions pair on-campus targets with upstream outreach. UPES should:

- **Guarantee admission interviews** for graduates of partner NGOs/schools (e.g., Purkal Youth Development Society).
- Run a **Summer Bridge** academy for EWS admits (maths, academic English, coding), documented as an SDG 1 project.

- Engage EWS alumni as mentors and ambassadors—closing the loop on social-mobility storytelling.

5 | Secure Stable Funding

- Diversify funding: 50 % university budget, 25 % corporate CSR (energy & tech partners), 25 % alumni endowment.
- For credibility, publish an *EWS Support Fund* audited statement annually.

6 | Milestone Timeline

Date	Milestone
Dec 2025	Baseline study completed; graduation targets approved & published.
Apr 2026	Emergency Aid Fund live; first Laptop-Loan cohort issued.
Jul 2026	Year-1 SDG 1 report published; first-year retention gap ≤ 3 pp.
Dec 2027	Full-ride seats reach 150; EWS GPA gap ≤ 0.25 .
Jul 2030	90 % on-time graduation for EWS UG; completion gap ≤ 2 pp for PG.

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