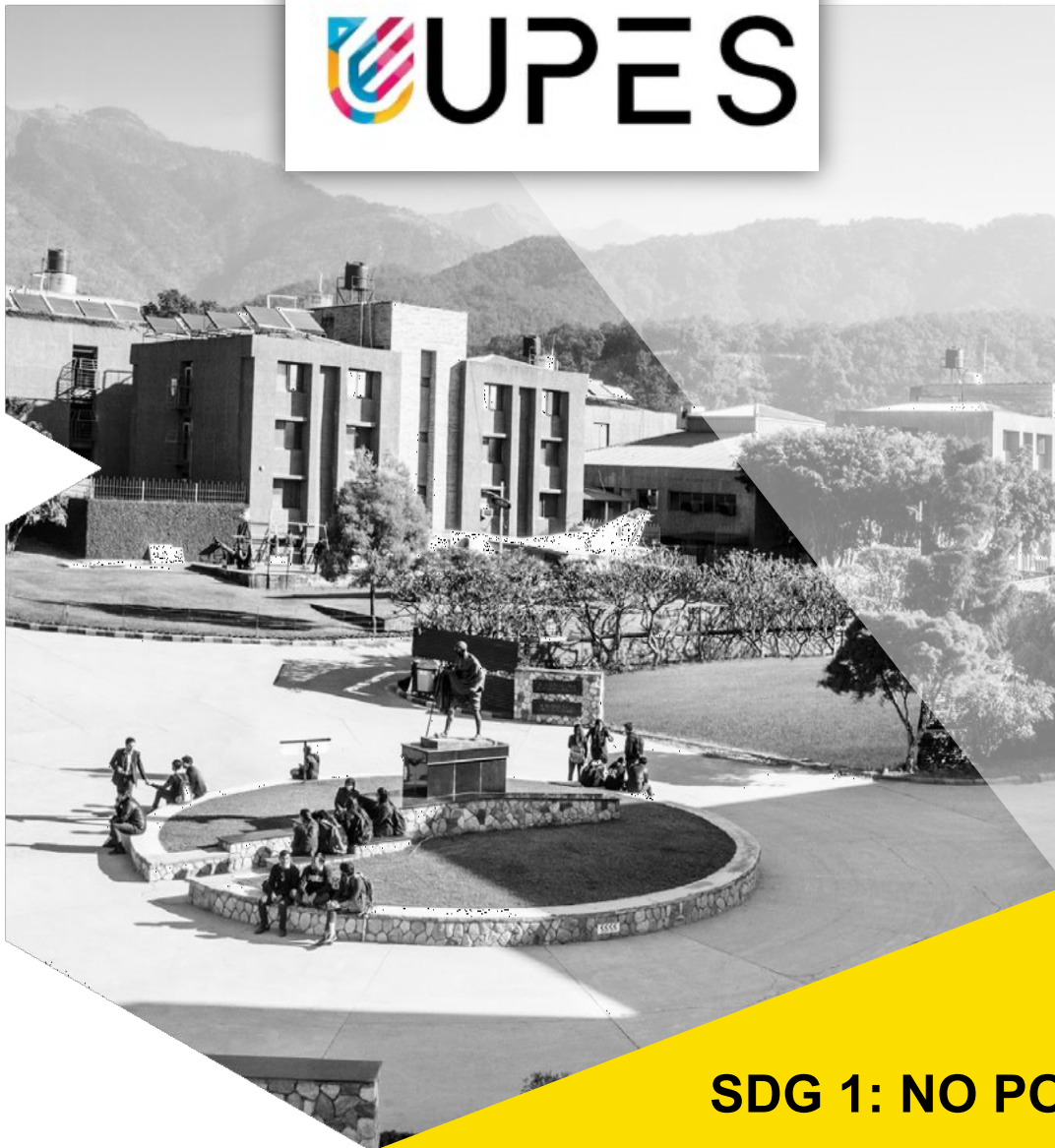




SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG 1: NO POVERTY

2025

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1.3.3 Does your university as a body provide support (e.g. food, housing, transportation, legal services) for students from poorest families to enable them to complete university?

Support for Students from Poorest Families at UPES

University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) has implemented various initiatives to support students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, helping them to complete their education. These initiatives include financial aid programs (scholarships and fee waivers) for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as special one-time support measures during emergencies. Below is a detailed overview of UPES's support in areas such as tuition assistance, housing, food, transportation, and legal services – including formal programs and notable ad-hoc events – and identification of any gaps in support.

Scholarships and Financial Assistance Programs

UPES offers a range of **scholarships and fee concessions** aimed at reducing the financial burden on students from low-income families. These programs apply to various levels (undergraduate and postgraduate) and criteria (merit-based, need-based, domicile, etc.). Key financial support initiatives include:

- **Jyoti Scholarship (Merit-cum-Need Freeship):** A merit-cum-means scholarship providing **100% tuition and academic fee waiver** for high-performing students from underprivileged backgrounds [1]. This freeship is targeted at students with **family income under ₹8 lakh** per annum (aligning with the Economically Weaker Section threshold) and is available for **51 students** across regular programs [1] [2]. It covers full tuition and academic fees to ensure access to quality education for poor students who demonstrate merit, although **hostel (housing) fees are not covered** under this scheme [1] (see Housing Support section). The Jyoti freeships are offered at both UG and PG levels (with an upper age limit of 20 for UG and 25 for PG applicants) [1].
- **Uttarakhand Domicile Scholarship:** UPES reserves a portion of seats for students from its home state and offers **25%–33% tuition fee concession** to Uttarakhand resident students who secure admission [3]. In the 2025-26 admissions, 25% of seats are earmarked for Uttarakhand-domiciled students with a **25% tuition fee waiver each semester** [1] [3]. This scholarship is a merit-cum-means based concession aimed at encouraging local students (many from rural or lower-income backgrounds of the state) to pursue higher education. *(Note: Earlier sources mention up to 33% waiver for Uttarakhand locals on a merit-cum-means basis [4], but current official policy specifies 25% tuition fee scholarship for domiciled students [1].)*



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University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), Dehradun Scholarships

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Scholarships

UPES Dehradun Scholarship 2025

UPES Dehradun offers a wide range of scholarships to support students from diverse backgrounds, based on merit, financial need, gender, state domicile, and other criteria. Merit-based scholarships are available for students with excellent academic records in entrance exams such as JEE, CUET, and board exams. Those scoring above 95% may receive up to a 100% tuition fee waiver, while students scoring between 85% and 95% can avail of waivers ranging from 75% to 85%. For MBA aspirants, scholarships are awarded to candidates with high scores in CAT, NMAT, and academic performance, offering a 20% tuition fee waiver per semester in the first year.

- **Merit-Based Scholarships:** UPES provides generous merit scholarships that, while based on academic excellence rather than explicit economic need, can greatly benefit students from poor families who excel academically. Top-performing entrants may receive **75% to 100% tuition fee waivers**. For example, students scoring above 95% in board exams or very high ranks in JEE/CUET are eligible for **up to 100% tuition waiver**, and those with scores in the 85–95% range can get substantial partial waivers [3]. Similarly, MBA candidates with high CAT/NMAT scores or ≥80% in undergraduate studies receive **20% tuition fee waivers for the first year** [1]. These merit scholarships are often limited to the first year (renewal depends on maintaining a certain GPA). While not explicitly need-based, they help reduce financial barriers for high-achieving students, some of whom may come from low-income households.
- **Shakti Scholarship (for Girls):** To promote women's education, UPES has a **"Shakti" scholarship for female students**, which provides a **20% tuition fee waiver** for eligible girl students meeting academic criteria (e.g. scoring 60–70% or above in Class 12) [3]. This incentive, though gender-based, also assists female students from financially weaker families by lowering the cost of attendance.
- **Sports (Vijay) Scholarship:** Students who have distinguished themselves in sports at national or international levels are supported through the **Vijay scholarship**, which covers **35% up to 100% of tuition fees** for top athletes. Notably, this scholarship **includes hostel fee coverage** in some cases [3] [2]. For example, students representing India internationally can receive a 100% tuition **and hostel** freeship under this scheme [2]. While sports scholarships are talent-based, they ensure that outstanding sportspersons (who may also come from modest economic backgrounds) are not held back by financial constraints.
- **Alumni Scholarship:** To encourage continuity of education, UPES offers a **50% tuition fee waiver** to its own graduates who return for higher studies (postgraduate programs) [3]. This helps UPES alumni from any financial background, including those of limited means, to afford postgraduate education at UPES.
- **Financial Aid for Loss of Earning Parent:** UPES extends a special financial support to students who face a sudden economic hardship due to family tragedy. If an enrolled student **loses an**

earning parent during the course of study, the university provides a tuition fee relaxation of **₹50,000 per semester until graduation** to help the student continue studies [1] [3]. This is essentially an emergency grant activated upon the demise of a breadwinner, easing the financial burden on the student's family so they can complete their degree.

- **Other Concessions:** Children of UPES employees and siblings of current students are eligible for **50%–75% fee concessions** as per university policy [3]. (While not targeted at the poorest segment in general, these indicate the university's broader commitment to support students with family connections to the institution.) Additionally, program-specific scholarships exist (e.g., up to 40% tuition waivers for certain programs in liberal studies, science, etc.) and early-bird discounts for top rankers [3] – these indirectly benefit meritorious students, potentially including those from low-income families.

Impact: Through the above scholarships and financial aid programs, UPES addresses the primary barrier for low-income students – tuition fees. The merit-cum-need “Jyoti” freeships in particular directly target economically weaker students with full fee waivers [1], ensuring that talented youth from poor families can study tuition-free. Other schemes like the domicile and merit scholarships provide partial relief that can be significant given the high fee levels (for instance, B.Tech programs cost ~₹17–22 lakh total [5]). It's important to note that most scholarships are for the first year only (especially merit-based entry scholarships) and may require maintaining a minimum GPA (typically 6.0 or higher) for renewal [1]. Only one scholarship can usually be availed at a time by a student [1] – the highest benefit is chosen if they qualify for multiple. In summary, UPES's financial assistance portfolio – spanning merit-cum-means freeships, regional concessions, gender-based support, sports scholarships, alumni discounts, and emergency aid – substantially helps reduce the financial burden on students from the poorest families, at least with respect to tuition costs.

Housing and Accommodation Support

Housing (hostel accommodation) is a significant expense for many students, especially those from outside Dehradun or from rural areas.

There are a couple of exceptional cases where housing costs are waived as part of special scholarships:

- Under the sports merit scholarships (Vijay Scholarship), **students who have represented India internationally in sports are given freeships that include hostel fee coverage** (up to 100%) [2]. This is a targeted incentive for elite athletes and is not based on financial need, but it does represent an instance of the university covering housing expenses for a student.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, UPES introduced a one-time “We Care” initiative (detailed in a later section) which offered **100% scholarship on the all-inclusive fee for students who lost a parent to COVID-19** [6]. The term “all-inclusive fee” indicates that **such students had their entire academic cost waived, including tuition and any other fees**, which likely would cover hostel and other mandatory charges as well. This effectively meant free education *and* accommodation for those particular cases, albeit as an emergency relief measure rather than a permanent program.

Upcoming Plan for Housing & Accommodation Support for Low-Income Students at UPES

Currently, UPES does not offer free or discounted on-campus housing specifically for students from the most economically disadvantaged families. Recognizing that this is a gap in student support, the university is now formulating a comprehensive plan to provide **housing and accommodation assistance** to low-income students (especially those on need-based scholarships).

The goal is to ensure that financial hardship with living expenses does not hinder any talented student's ability to **finish their studies**. Stable housing is crucial for academic success – research shows that students facing housing insecurity are far less likely to complete their degrees [7]. By addressing accommodation needs, UPES aims to create a more inclusive environment where all students can thrive.

Rationale for Housing Support

Affordable accommodation is a critical factor in student retention and success. Studies have found that nearly half of college students experience housing insecurity during their education, and those without stable housing have lower graduation rates. Conversely, students who live on or near campus with access to food, academic support, and social activities tend to have **higher retention and completion rates**, a trend especially pronounced for first-generation and low-income students.

Ensuring secure housing means students from low-income backgrounds can focus on academics rather than worrying about rent, leading to better performance and a higher likelihood of graduating on time. In short, providing housing support directly **encourages financially challenged students to remain enrolled and finish their degrees**, aligning with UPES's commitment to equitable education.

Key Features of the Proposed Policy

UPES is planning a multi-faceted **Accommodation Support Program** targeted at students from low-income households (such as recipients of existing merit-cum-means scholarships). The policy is envisioned to include:

- **Hostel Fee Waivers or Subsidies:** Students who qualify as economically disadvantaged (e.g. those on the *Jyoti Scholarship* or other need-based aid) will receive full or partial waivers of campus hostel fees. This effectively extends their scholarship to cover living costs, not just tuition. For instance, a **housing scholarship** could offset a significant portion of hostel charges each semester, similar to how some universities abroad provide stipends toward dorm rent for needy students. This reduces the out-of-pocket expense for vulnerable students to nearly zero, ensuring that accommodation costs are not a roadblock to continuing education.
- **Increased Affordable Housing Capacity:** UPES is also evaluating its on-campus housing capacity with plans to **expand hostel facilities** dedicated to low-income and first-generation scholars. The university will study the feasibility of constructing new residence halls or partnering with nearby housing providers to reserve affordable rooms for its students. In fact,

university leadership has indicated that **planning is underway**, and construction of additional hostel space is expected to start very soon as part of this initiative. By proactively increasing supply, UPES can guarantee a hostel seat for every student who needs one, eliminating the need for poor students to seek costly off-campus rentals.

- **Pilot Implementation and Scaling:** As a first step, the support may roll out as a pilot program targeting incoming first-year students from low-income backgrounds (who often face the toughest transition). UPES could pilot its housing aid with a select batch of eligible students, monitor the impact on their academic performance and retention, and then expand the program to cover more students in subsequent years. Funding for this pilot will be budgeted by the university (and potentially supplemented by alumni or donor contributions), ensuring sustainability as the program grows.

Implementation Timeline

UPES is committed to moving quickly on this accommodation support plan. **In the near term (upcoming academic year)**, the university will finalize policy details – including eligibility criteria, number of hostel scholarships available, and the application process for students. By allocating resources in the university budget and exploring external funding, UPES aims to start offering housing support to low-income scholarship students as early as the next intake cycle. Simultaneously, the groundwork for expanding physical infrastructure has begun: site surveys and planning for new low-cost student housing blocks are in progress, with construction expected to commence very soon. The university's administration is treating this as a high-priority initiative, acknowledging that every month of delay could mean a student from a poor family struggling or dropping out due to unaffordable living costs. The **official rollout** of the housing assistance program (potentially named something like the *UPES Housing Scholarship or Freeship Hostel Scheme*) is anticipated to align with these new hostel facilities becoming available.

Expected Benefits

Once implemented, this housing and accommodation support policy will significantly **encourage low-income students to persist and graduate**. By removing the burden of hostel fees, UPES will effectively level the playing field – a student from a bottom 20% income household will have the same campus living opportunity as their peers. This stability translates to better academic focus, involvement in campus life, and utilization of university resources (libraries, labs, mentorship programs) without the commute barriers. University data and broader research strongly suggest such measures will boost student success: students living in affordable campus housing with meal access and support services show improved retention and completion outcomes. Moreover, providing housing support demonstrates UPES's dedication to its students' well-being beyond academics. It reinforces that the institution is not only investing in **tuition scholarships** but also in the **overall living conditions** necessary for learning. In the long run, the university expects higher graduation rates among its scholarship students, a reduction in dropout rates due to financial stress, and a more vibrant, diverse alumni community. The policy also sends a powerful message to prospective students that **financial constraints should not stop someone from achieving a UPES education**.

Conclusion

UPES is proactively **building a future where no student is left behind due to housing insecurity**. The forthcoming housing and accommodation support for low-income scholars will bridge a crucial gap in the university's student support system. By launching this initiative and fast-tracking the development of additional hostels, UPES will create a supportive environment that nurtures talent from all economic backgrounds.

This planned policy underlines the university's mission of inclusive excellence – ensuring that students from the poorest families are not only admitted on scholarships, but are fully supported through graduation. With secure accommodation and reduced financial stress, low-income students will be empowered to focus on their studies, engage with campus opportunities, and ultimately **complete their degrees successfully**.

UPES's commitment to start work on this support program very soon exemplifies its dedication to encouraging every student to finish their study and pursue their aspirations, irrespective of their economic circumstances.

Food Service Support for Students at UPES

Purpose and Rationale

UPES (University of Petroleum and Energy Studies) recognizes that **adequate nutrition is critical for student health, well-being, and academic success**. Research on college students has shown that those without access to sufficient food experience higher stress and lower academic performance. Ensuring students have healthy meals throughout the day improves concentration, learning capacity, and overall wellness.

The UPES Student Meal Support Program is a newly established, active policy to fill this gap, ensuring that no student is impeded in their studies due to hunger or poor nutrition. This policy outlines a dedicated meal program – at highly affordable prices – focused on providing healthy meals to eligible students in need.

On-Campus Dining Facilities (Cafeterias & Mess)

UPES has multiple dining facilities on campus, including a multi-storied food court and several cafeterias, aimed at providing **nutritious, balanced meals, snacks, and beverages** to students at both the Bidholi and Kandoli campuses [8]. All hostels have an attached **mess (dining hall)** facility [5]. Resident students receive **four meals a day** (breakfast, lunch, evening tea/snacks, and dinner) as part of the hostel meal plan [9]. The annual **hostel fee (which includes meals)** ranges roughly from **₹1.74 lakh to ₹2.41 lakh** (depending on room sharing and amenities) [10] [9]. *Examples:* A triple-sharing room with meals costs about ₹1.83 lakh/year [10]. Menus typically feature Indian home-style food – for instance, a student-shared menu for a day included items like **idli-sambar (breakfast), rice with dal, vegetable curry, salad, raita** and an evening snack (e.g. chowmein) [11].

Quality: The catering is managed by professional providers (e.g. Shugan Group), and UPES administration has praised their hygiene and food quality standards [12]. However, student reviews note the mess food to be average at times, with variety and quality improving in the cafeterias on campus [8].

Subsidies: There is *no indication of a special subsidy or discount on mess charges specifically for low-income students in official policy*. The **meal plan cost is uniformly bundled** in hostel fees for all residents. UPES does offer general financial aid on a **merit-cum-need basis** (scholarships) for tuition fees [13] [1], but **no policy document or announcement was found that directly discounts or waives dining fees for economically disadvantaged students**. In fact, the flagship need-based scholarship (“Jyoti Scholarship”) covers 100% of tuition/academic fees for 51 underprivileged yet meritorious students **but explicitly excludes the hostel facility**, meaning even those students must pay for food/hostel or seek other aid [1]. Some exceptional merit scholarships (e.g. for top sports achievers) include **free hostel and mess** as part of the award [14], but these are limited to those specific criteria (sports medalists, etc.), not a general subsidy program for low-income students.

External Food Vendors Near Campus (Student Discounts & MoUs)

Students at UPES frequent a variety of **off-campus eateries** around the Bidholi and Kandoli campuses. The university’s residential Bidholi campus is in a relatively rural setting (“Planet Bidholi”), but a few popular student hangouts have emerged **“in and around the UPES Bidholi campus.”** These include spots like **Café Tif** (for pizzas, sandwiches, tea/coffee), **Maggi Point** (a hillside shack famous for noodles and quick bites with a view), **Café Frisco** (known for desserts and snacks), and **Tulips** (popular for cold coffee, sandwiches, and baked goods) [15]. According to student feedback, these local cafes are **affordably priced for the student budget** – one postgrad student mentions that Café Frisco is *“cost-effective and the taste is good,”* with satisfactory hygiene, service, and pricing [16]. The Kandoli campus is closer to Dehradun city, giving students access to urban eateries and cafes (the university even highlights the **“7 Best Cafes in Dehradun”** in a blog post for students) [17].

– **Campus Events:** UPES does organize **food-themed events and partnerships that enrich campus life** (though not necessarily aimed at cost relief). For example, the Hostel and Mess Committee has hosted a *“Hostel Food Fest – a feast to remember,”* even taking students on a *“refreshing getaway to Maldevta”* where hostellers from Bidholi and Kandoli enjoyed an outing organized around food and recreation [18]. The university also held an **International Food Festival** in April 2023 with 60+ exchange students from 27 countries showcasing their cuisines on campus to celebrate cultural diversity [19]. These events, often highlighted on official social media and blogs, indicate active engagement with food as a cultural and community element.

Ad-hoc food support events

UPES students and staff have engaged in community outreach related to food in the broader sense (though not necessarily targeting enrolled students). For example, the National Service Scheme (NSS) unit or student clubs occasionally organize drives to distribute food to underprivileged communities outside campus (as part of social responsibility), according to social media updates.

Emergency and Ad-hoc Support Initiatives

Beyond the established programs, UPES has occasionally introduced **special support measures in response to emergencies or specific needs**. These are often **one-time or ad-hoc initiatives** rather than permanent offerings but have been crucial for students affected by extraordinary circumstances:

- **“We Care” COVID-19 Scholarships (2020–2021):** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UPES launched the **“We Care” initiative** aimed at supporting students facing difficulties due to the pandemic [6]. Under this initiative:
 - **20% tuition fee scholarship** was offered to **children of COVID-19 frontline workers** (including doctors, nurses, sanitation and municipal workers, police, military, etc.) [6]. This applied to both existing and new students who are wards of those frontline heroes, recognizing their families’ service and potential financial strain.
 - A **100% scholarship on all inclusive fees** (full fee waiver) was provided to **students who lost a parent due to COVID-19** [6]. This was a critical support for those suddenly bereaved and at risk of dropping out for financial reasons – covering tuition and other fees entirely so that the student could continue studies without any monetary burden.
 - Additionally, a **20% scholarship on one year’s tuition** was announced for wards of **school teachers** (as a gesture of thanks to educators who kept learning going during the pandemic) [6]. New students in 2021 who were children of teachers got 20% off their first-year tuition, and existing students who are teacher’s children got 20% off their current year.
 - The **We Care initiative also provided 24×7 access to trained counselors for students and their family members** to support mental and emotional health during the pandemic [6]. This recognition of mental health as part of student support was important at a time of heightened anxiety and grief. The Vice Chancellor noted that *“We Care... is aimed at the physical, mental, emotional and financial well-being of our students”*, underlining a holistic approach [6].
- **Fee Payment Flexibility and Relief:** As mentioned earlier, UPES gave a **one-time fee reduction (“Covid scholarship”) of ₹16,875** to all students for that year [20], effectively waiving certain non-tuition components of fees since classes were online. Furthermore, the fee could be paid in two installments that year (Rs 70k and Rs 33k in one case) as a **“relief measure”** [20]. While students still raised concerns about overall fees, this gesture did ease the immediate payment burden slightly. It demonstrated an ad-hoc financial relief in an emergency, even if not entirely meeting student demands.
- **Other Student Welfare Measures:** UPES has a Student Welfare Department which, on a case-by-case basis, can consider hardship requests. For instance, if a student’s family undergoes severe financial distress (other than the loss-of-parent scenario), they might petition the university for assistance. Though not widely publicized, universities sometimes have internal

funds for such cases. UPES's published "Student Financial Support" policy (for loss of parent) is one example of a structured approach [1].

- **Community and Philanthropic Engagement:** UPES and its community occasionally conduct drives that, while not directly giving cash or services to enrolled students, reflect a spirit of support. For example, UPES students have been involved in donating to relief funds, distributing essentials in disaster-hit areas of Uttarakhand, etc. The **Legal Aid Clinic** and other clubs engage with underprivileged communities, providing pro bono services and raising awareness (such as legal literacy camps, health camps, etc.). These activities contribute to an environment of social responsibility and support, even if the beneficiaries are external.

In summary, **UPES has shown willingness to implement special support measures in extraordinary situations** (like the COVID pandemic). The "We Care" scholarships and counseling access in 2020-21 are prime examples of ad-hoc support that addressed both financial and well-being aspects [6]. These efforts likely helped many students from affected families to continue their studies during the crisis. However, such measures were temporary and situation-specific.

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