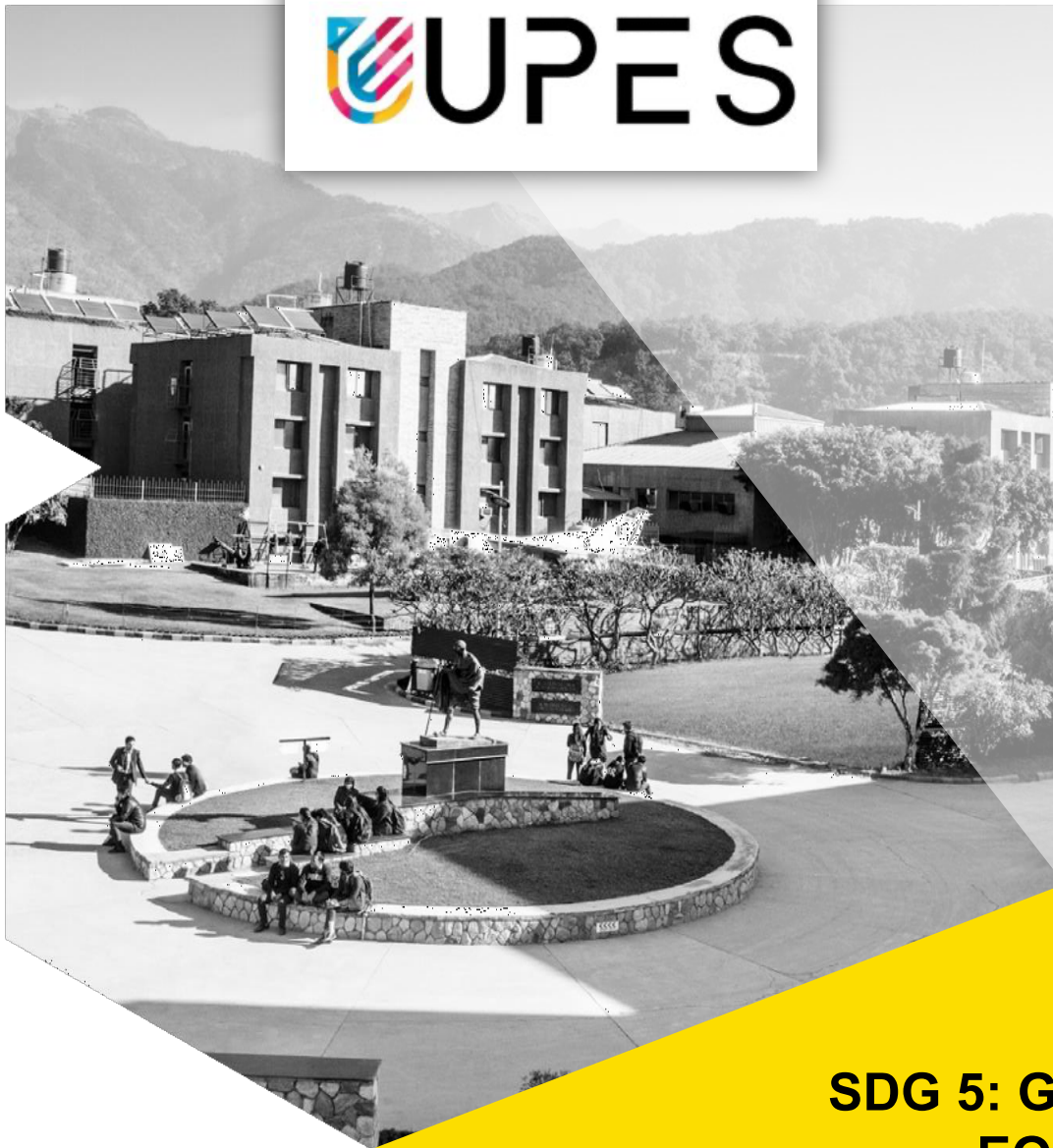




SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**SDG 5: GENDER
EQUALITY**

2025

Table of Contents

5.6.2 Does your university as a body have a policy of non-discrimination for transgender people? .3	
Evaluation of UPES Non-Discrimination Policy for Transgender Individuals (SDG 10 Compliance)	3
Official Non-Discrimination Policy at UPES	3
Existence of Policy	3
Public Availability	3
Implementation and Enforcement Mechanisms.....	4
Anti-Discrimination Cell.....	4
Grievance Redressal Mechanisms	4
Anti-Ragging and Harassment Policies	4
Scope of the Policy – Coverage of Students, Staff, and Applicants	5
Coverage on Campus (Students and Staff)	5
Applicants and Admissions.....	5
Inclusion Initiatives and Support Programs.....	6
Equal Opportunity & Diversity Initiatives	6
• Scholarships for Underrepresented Genders	6
• Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Programs.....	6
• Sensitivity & Awareness Training	6
• Support Services	7
• Inclusive Events for Other Marginalized Groups:	7
Alignment with National Laws and Higher Education Standards	7
National Legal Framework.....	7
UGC and Regulatory Expectations.....	8
Commitment to Continuous Improvement.....	8
Conclusion and Key Findings	9
Clear finding	9
References.....	10

5.6.2 Does your university as a body have a policy of non-discrimination for transgender people?

Evaluation of UPES Non-Discrimination Policy for Transgender Individuals (SDG 10 Compliance)

Context – SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and Policy Commitments: Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings for SDG 10 emphasize a university's commitment to reducing inequalities, including robust policies protecting marginalized groups. A key indicator is whether the institution has an explicit *non-discrimination policy inclusive of transgender people* [1]. This report evaluates the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) on that criterion, examining official policies, implementation structures, public availability, scope (covering students, staff, and applicants), inclusion initiatives, and alignment with Indian national regulations and accreditation expectations regarding transgender inclusion.

Official Non-Discrimination Policy at UPES

Existence of Policy

UPES does have an official policy framework that prohibits discrimination on various grounds. The university's **Anti-Discrimination Committee** is tasked with preventing and addressing *“any kind of discrimination on campus on the basis of gender, race, caste, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, or disability”* [2]. While the policy wording does not explicitly use the term “transgender,” it includes “**gender**” as a protected category alongside “**sexual orientation**”, implying that individuals of **all gender identities** (male, female, or transgender/non-binary) are covered under its protection. In practice, this means UPES is committed to **non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity** even if not stated verbatim, since transgender persons fall under the broader gender non-discrimination mandate. The policy thus aligns with the principle that no student or staff member should face bias due to their gender identity or expression.

Public Availability

The non-discrimination policy is **publicly accessible** on the official UPES website. It appears in the *Mandatory Disclosures* section, where the Anti-Discrimination Committee's mandate is described and a PDF of the policy/committee details is available for download [2]. This transparency satisfies the Impact Rankings criteria that evidence of the policy be publicly available [1]. Any stakeholder or evaluator can verify UPES's stance via these publicly posted documents. The wide publication of the policy reflects institutional commitment and allows students, staff, and applicants to be aware of their rights under the university's non-discrimination framework.

Implementation and Enforcement Mechanisms

Anti-Discrimination Cell

UPES has instituted an **Anti-Discrimination Cell (Committee)** specifically to implement and monitor this policy. This committee is empowered to oversee all measures preventing discrimination and to address grievances or incidents if they occur [2]. The committee includes designated officials (including senior faculty/administrators) and has a formal contact channel (the official email **antidiscell@upes.ac.in** is provided in university documents) for reporting discrimination complaints. The existence of this cell demonstrates that UPES not only has a policy in words but also a **dedicated structure to enforce it**. The committee can investigate complaints of bias or harassment against any student or employee on the protected grounds (e.g., gender identity, caste, etc.) and recommend remedial action. This aligns with UGC guidelines that universities establish an anti-discrimination officer or cell to uphold equity on campus.

Grievance Redressal Mechanisms

In addition to the Anti-Discrimination Cell, UPES maintains a broader **Student Grievance Redressal system** as mandated by the University Grants Commission. The university affirms that it has a grievance handling mechanism per the UGC (Grievance Redressal) Regulations 2018, with an Ombudsperson appointed and a dedicated email for complaints [2]. This mechanism is **easily accessible and time-bound**, ensuring any complaint – including those related to discrimination or unfair treatment – is addressed fairly and promptly. A transgender student or any aggrieved party can thus seek resolution either through the Anti-Discrimination Committee or the general grievance portal, guaranteeing multiple avenues for justice. Notably, UPES's grievance policy pledges **equitable and timely resolution** of all complaints, reflecting the institution's commitment to a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

Anti-Ragging and Harassment Policies

UPES has complementary policies that reinforce non-discrimination principles. The university's anti-ragging policy (in line with UGC regulations) explicitly prohibits any abuse or humiliation of students that violates their dignity **"on grounds of gender, race, color, religion, region, caste, [or] physical features/appearance"** [3]. This means any bullying or harassment of a student for being transgender (or belonging to any particular group) would be considered a serious ragging offence, subject to strict disciplinary action. Likewise, UPES upholds the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013** on campus. An **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** is in place to address sexual harassment, and the university is *"committed to providing a safe working and academic environment to all girl students and its women employees"* [3]. While the ICC is focused on cisgender women's safety as per the law, its existence contributes to a general culture of respect and safety. Moreover, gender-sensitization programs under the ICC (such as workshops and counseling sessions on gender awareness) likely include components on respecting all genders. These structures – anti-ragging committees and ICC – work in tandem with the Anti-Discrimination Cell,

creating a **network of support and enforcement** to uphold non-discrimination from multiple angles (general misconduct, sexual misconduct, etc.). In summary, UPES has put in place the necessary **institutional machinery** (committees, regulations, and reporting channels) to ensure that the non-discrimination policy for transgender individuals (and other protected groups) is actively enforced and not merely symbolic.

Scope of the Policy – Coverage of Students, Staff, and Applicants

Coverage on Campus (Students and Staff)

The UPES non-discrimination policy is institution-wide, covering **all members of the campus community**, including students, faculty, and support staff. The official statement from the Anti-Discrimination Committee explicitly applies to “**on campus**” conduct [2], indicating that in the university’s learning and working environment, no individual should be treated unfavorably due to personal characteristics like gender identity. This protection would apply in academic settings, employment practices, campus facilities, and any university-sponsored activity. For example, a transgender student is entitled to the same respect, resources, and opportunities as any other student; similarly, a staff member or faculty applicant who is transgender must be evaluated on merit and qualifications without bias. UPES’s HR policies (Principles of Engagement) reinforce **diversity and inclusion** for employees, and the Strategic Plan likewise stresses inclusivity as a core value [4]. In its Self-Study Report for accreditation, UPES specifically included the “**Constitution of Anti-discrimination Cell**” as part of its governance and policy documents [5], underscoring that the policy covers and benefits *all* constituents of the university.

Applicants and Admissions

Importantly, UPES’s commitment to non-discrimination extends to the **admissions process**. The university explicitly states that it “*thoroughly assess[es] and evaluate[s] each application we receive on an equal basis*”, valuing the potential of each individual [4]. In practice, this means that applicants are not screened out or given preference due to gender or any other personal factor unrelated to merit. For instance, a transgender applicant is afforded the same consideration as any other candidate for admission. UPES’s **unified application form** includes inclusive options – following national mandates, the form allows applicants to identify their gender beyond the binary, ensuring **transgender or non-binary applicants can register their identity** without prejudice. This inclusive application process fulfills regulatory expectations post the 2014 NALSA judgment (which recognized transgender as a third gender) and demonstrates that UPES actively welcomes students of diverse gender identities. By treating all applications equally and offering a non-discriminatory admissions pathway, UPES helps protect transgender individuals at the very gateway of higher education. Once admitted, those students fall under the protection of the campus non-discrimination policies and cells described above. In summary, **prospective students, current students, and staff** are all within the scope of UPES’s non-discrimination commitments – from recruitment and admissions to day-to-day campus life and employment, **transgender individuals are included and protected** at each stage.

Inclusion Initiatives and Support Programs

Equal Opportunity & Diversity Initiatives

Beyond policy statements, UPES engages in concrete initiatives that reflect its commitment to inclusion and reduced inequalities (the essence of SDG 10). While the university's signature programs have largely focused on gender parity for women and empowerment of disadvantaged groups, these efforts contribute to an environment that is supportive of all marginalized communities, including transgender people. Some notable initiatives include:

- [Scholarships for Underrepresented Genders](#)

UPES has instituted the "*Shakti*" scholarship – a 25% tuition fee scholarship granted **unconditionally to all female students** in undergraduate and postgraduate programs since 2020 [6]. This affirmative action to boost female enrollment (over 1,300 women have benefited, raising the female student ratio) underscores the university's philosophy of equal opportunity in education. Although this program targets cisgender women, it signals an overall commitment to gender inclusivity. A transgender student who is legally recognized as female would also be eligible for such benefits, indicating that UPES's inclusion measures can extend to transgender individuals under the appropriate category. Moreover, by publicly championing women's education, UPES is helping to **break gender stereotypes** and create a campus culture that values gender equality – a culture from which transgender and non-binary students also benefit (due to increased awareness and reduced bias among the community).

- [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Programs](#)

UPES emphasizes diversity in campus life through cultural and educational programs. For example, the university organizes events like "*Hues of Holi*" and international food festivals (celebrating global cultures from Mexico to Gambia) to highlight and celebrate the diversity of its student body [4]. Such events, while not specific to gender identity, foster a broad ethos of acceptance and respect for differences. A student-led LGBTQ+ awareness discussion or participation in pride-related observances would naturally fit into this inclusive ethos (even if specific examples are not documented publicly, the supportive climate makes them possible). The presence of a diverse student community from many backgrounds, and UPES's encouragement of dialogue and cultural exchange, can help transgender students feel safer and more included.

- [Sensitivity & Awareness Training](#)

The **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** and the Anti-Discrimination Cell conduct **gender sensitization and anti-discrimination workshops** as part of their mandate. UPES's official documents note objectives like promoting gender equity, organizing sessions with counselors for students and staff, and holding focus groups on campus to gauge safety perceptions [7]. These sessions are aimed at building awareness about issues such as harassment and bias. Although women's safety is a focal point, topics often include broader gender and sexuality discussions. It is likely that through such trainings, faculty, staff, and students are educated about transgender individuals' rights and the

importance of using respectful language and behavior. This proactive education is a form of support, creating allies and reducing ignorance that might otherwise lead to discrimination.

- **Support Services**

UPES offers support structures that any student, including those who are transgender, can utilize. The university provides **personal counseling services** for students (as indicated by the availability of counseling reports in its NAAC documentation), which can be crucial for those facing identity-related stress or discrimination. Additionally, student clubs and forums contribute to peer support – while a dedicated LGBTQ+ resource center is not mentioned, the general student welfare framework is inclusive. The **Career Services team** also has a mandate to assist all students (for instance, mentoring underprivileged scholarship students through internships and placement) [8]. In principle, this means transgender students would receive equal guidance and placement support, and the university would work with employers to ensure fair opportunities.

- **Inclusive Events for Other Marginalized Groups:**

In line with SDG 10, UPES has shown leadership in inclusion beyond gender. Notably, it hosted “*Sahayak Hackathon 1.0*,” India’s first entirely virtual hackathon designed to develop solutions for persons with disabilities [9]. With hundreds of participants nationwide, this event not only produced tech innovations for disabled individuals but also raised awareness and empathy among the broader student community for people facing different challenges. Such initiatives demonstrate an institutional ethos of **empathy and support for marginalized populations**. A campus that champions rights of women, the differently-abled, economically weaker sections (through scholarships like *Project Protsaahan* for underprivileged youth [8]), and other vulnerable groups is more likely to also embrace and uplift transgender individuals. This creates an environment where transgender students and staff can feel safe and seek support if needed, and it lays the groundwork for more targeted inclusion measures in the future.

Alignment with National Laws and Higher Education Standards

National Legal Framework

UPES’s non-discrimination policy aligns with and supports compliance to India’s legal protections for transgender persons. The **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** explicitly prohibits discrimination against transgender individuals in education, employment, and service provision. It mandates that no educational institution can deny admission or discriminate against a transgender person, and requires institutions to provide necessary facilities conducive to learning [10]. By having a policy in place that covers gender identity (via “gender” non-discrimination) and by **including transgender options in admissions**, UPES is adhering to this law. Moreover, in March 2024, detailed guidelines were issued (for instance by the Maharashtra state government, as reported in national media) to make campuses more inclusive for transpersons – calling for measures like “*initiating action against colleges for refusing admissions on the basis of gender, reserving hostel sections for*

transgender students, establishing cells to address issues of discrimination or harassment, and strict adherence to the Transgender Persons Act 2019” [10]. UPES’s existing practices meet these expectations: it does **not refuse admission based on gender**, it has an **Anti-Discrimination Cell** (which can serve as the required cell to address grievances), and it strives to include all students in activities and opportunities. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also advocates for inclusive education for all, including transgender students [10], and UPES’s policies reflect that spirit of inclusion.

UGC and Regulatory Expectations

The University Grants Commission and other regulatory bodies in India have been encouraging universities to foster gender-inclusive campuses. For example, UGC’s 2015 guidelines following the NALSA judgment urged higher education institutions to recognize a “third gender” in all documentation and to make necessary accommodations (such as inclusive facilities and anti-discrimination measures). UGC also introduced the concept of “**Gender Champions**” in colleges – student ambassadors who promote gender sensitivity – explicitly stating that “*Gender Champions can be boys, girls or transgender*” in order to involve all genders in the cause of equality [11]. While specific data on UPES’s implementation of the Gender Champion program is not provided here, the university’s overall compliance with creating an anti-discriminatory environment is evident. Additionally, **NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council)** in its accreditation criteria evaluates an institution’s commitment to equity and inclusiveness. In UPES’s NAAC Self-Study Report, the university has documented its structures like the Anti-Discrimination Cell, Internal Complaints Committee, etc., under the criterion of Governance and Institutional Values [12]. NAAC also looks for evidence of **sensitization programs and inclusive policies** under its “Institutional Values and Best Practices” section. UPES’s demonstration of policies (e.g. 5.6.2 in THE submission specifically addressing transgender non-discrimination) and practices (scholarships, diversity events, etc.) would satisfy many of these accreditation benchmarks. By proactively making these policies public and showing outcomes (such as increased female enrollment and diverse student participation), UPES aligns well with what national higher education bodies expect in terms of **transgender inclusion and overall reduced inequalities** on campus.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

It is worth noting that the Impact Rankings methodology not only checks for the existence of policies but also whether they are **recent or regularly reviewed** [1]. UPES’s policies appear to be up-to-date – for instance, the Anti-Discrimination Committee information is found in recently updated disclosures, and initiatives like the Shakti scholarship were launched in 2020, showing responsiveness to current needs. This suggests that UPES is keeping pace with evolving social mandates and is likely to refine its policies further as national guidelines on transgender inclusion (such as creating gender-neutral facilities, training staff in gender diversity, etc.) become more commonplace. The university’s strategic plan emphasizes *Inclusivity* and *Diversity* as guiding principles [4], indicating high-level commitment to improvement in this domain.

Conclusion and Key Findings

UPES demonstrates an ongoing commitment to inclusion through various initiatives: from scholarships promoting gender balance to events and programs that celebrate diversity and support disadvantaged groups. These initiatives cultivate a campus atmosphere of acceptance, which benefits transgender individuals and other marginalized cohorts by reducing stigma and providing support. While no specific LGBTQ+ center or transgender-focused program is highlighted, the **inclusive culture and support systems in place are conducive to transgender inclusion**. UPES's efforts align with India's legal requirements (Transgender Persons Act, 2019) and with UGC/NAAC expectations, indicating that the university is proactively contributing to the broader goal of reducing inequalities in higher education [10] [12].

Clear finding

UPES has an official non-discrimination policy that covers transgender persons; it has instituted structures (Anti-Discrimination Cell, grievance mechanism, ICC) to enforce this policy; the policy is publicly available and was updated in recent years; it covers all members of the university community as well as prospective students. The university also engages in inclusion and awareness initiatives, though these are more pronounced for gender equality (women's empowerment) and disability inclusion, with implicit applicability to transgender inclusion. Overall, UPES's policies and practices illustrate a compliance and commitment to **protecting transgender individuals from discrimination**, in alignment with SDG 10 criteria and national standards for equity in education.

References

- [1] UPES, "Impact Rankings," [Online]. Available: https://the-ranking.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/IMPACT/IMPACT2023/THE.ImpactRankings.METHODOLOGY.2023_v1.2.pdf. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [2] UPES, "Mandatory Disclosures," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/about-us/mandatory-disclosure>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [3] UPES, "Student Affairs," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/student-space/student-affairs-section>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [4] UPES, "Does your university as a body have a policy of non-discrimination for transgender people?," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/assets/pdf/SDG5/5.6/5.6.2.pdf>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [5] UPES, "NAAC - Self Study Report (SSR)," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/iqac/ssr,of%20Internal%20Complaints%20Committee%20View>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [6] UPES, "Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy at UPES," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/assets/pdf/EDI.pdf>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [7] UPES, "Anti-Discrimination committee," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/assets/pdf/anti-disc-committee.pdf>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [8] UPES, "Does your university as a body participate in policy making at local, regional, national and/or," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/assets/pdf/SDG1/1.4/1.4.4.pdf>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [9] UPES, "Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/sustainable-development-goals/10>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [10] THE TIMES OF INDIA, "Guidelines issued to make campuses inclusive for transpersons," [Online]. Available: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/inclusive-guidelines-for-transpersons-in-college-campuses/articleshow/108535153.cms>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [11] Technological University, "CIRCULAR," [Online]. Available: <https://vtu.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Circular-UGC-Guidelines-for-Gender-Champions-in-HEIs.pdf#:~:text=%5BPDF%5D%20Circular,HEIS>. [Accessed 09 2025].
- [12] UPES, "NAAC - Self Study Report (SSR)," [Online]. Available: <https://www.upes.ac.in/iqac/ssr>. [Accessed 09 2025].

