



BETHLAHEM INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING

KARUNGAL - 629 157, KANYAKUMARI DIST., TAMIL NADU.

(Approved by AICTE Vide : FNo. 06/05/TN/E&T/2007/25 dt. 02-06-2008 &

Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai)

Phone : 04651 - 268466, 268655, Fax : 04651 - 268466

E-mail : mail@bethlahem.org, Website : www.bethlahem.org

**5. Guidelines to provide Equitable Opportunity for
the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups
(SEDGs) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)**



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Section:I

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)

Aim:

To promote equal opportunities in education and personal development by providing academic, financial, and emotional support to socio-economically disadvantaged groups, thereby fostering inclusivity, empowerment, and holistic growth.

Objective:

1. Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)

To identify and support individuals who, due to historical and systemic disadvantages, lack equal access to education and opportunities, and to enable their full participation in higher education.

2. Economically Weaker Section (EWS)

To provide reservation and support to economically backward individuals not covered under SC/ST/OBC categories, based on income criteria, to promote equal opportunities in education and employment.

3. Other Backward Classes (OBC)

To recognize and assist socially and educationally backward groups through affirmative action and reservation policies, facilitating their inclusion and upliftment.

4. Creamy Layer / Non-Creamy Layer

To ensure that benefits of OBC reservations reach the truly disadvantaged within the OBC community by excluding economically advanced members (Creamy Layer) from such benefits.

5. Persons with Disabilities

To guarantee inclusion, accessibility, and equal participation for individuals with disabilities in society and higher education, as per legal rights.

6. Persons with Benchmark Disabilities



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To offer focused support, including reservation and benefits, to individuals with significant levels of disability ($\geq 40\%$), ensuring their full integration into educational and employment systems.

7. Scheduled Castes (SC)

To rectify historical injustices and discrimination faced by these communities through constitutional safeguards and affirmative action in education and employment.

8. Scheduled Tribes (ST)

To empower and integrate tribal communities into the mainstream by offering them special rights and benefits, ensuring their socio-economic development.

9. SEDGs Budget

To create a dedicated financial provision for the support and welfare of SEDG students, enabling higher educational institutions to directly address their needs through CSR, donations, and institutional funds



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Section:II

Intervention to make the HEIs Inclusive, Equitable and Sensitive to SEDGs

Aim:

To empower students belonging to Socially and Educationally Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) by providing academic and financial support through Bridge Courses and the Earn-while-Learn (EwL) Scheme, thereby ensuring their smooth transition into higher education, improving academic performance, building employable skills, and enhancing their overall educational experience and career readiness.

Objectives of Bridge Courses

1. To help students address and overcome learning difficulties and academic gaps.
2. To support learners with diverse abilities and challenges in achieving their full academic potential.
3. To serve as a transitional support system for newly admitted students.
4. To provide SEDGs students with sufficient time and guidance for a smooth adjustment to the academic environment.
5. To offer foundational knowledge in core subjects, preparing students for the upcoming academic sessions or semesters.
6. To build students' confidence and equip them with the skills needed to face future academic challenges effectively.



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Section:III

Social-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) Cell

Aim:

To empower and support students belonging to socio-economically disadvantaged groups by ensuring equal access to academic, financial, and personal development opportunities, thereby fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Objectives of the SEDGs Cell:

1. To uphold and protect the constitutional rights of SEDGs students.
2. To ensure a safe, inclusive, and secure environment within HEIs for SEDGs students.
3. To provide socio-emotional, academic support, and mentorship through effective counselling and monitoring mechanisms.
4. To oversee the implementation and monitoring of orientation and bridge courses developed by HEIs for the benefit of SEDGs students.
5. To ensure effective execution of programs and initiatives designed by HEIs to enhance academic participation among SEDGs students.
6. To implement and monitor government policies, including reservation policies and various schemes, programs, facilities, and guidelines aimed at supporting SEDGs students.
7. To support and promote outreach programs that enable SEDGs students to access and benefit from educational and academic opportunities offered by HEIs.
8. To implement preventive measures and enforce legal safeguards against discrimination, violence, and atrocities towards students from SEDGs.
9. To disseminate, promote, and ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines and directives issued by the UGC and Government concerning SEDGs.
10. To ensure timely redressal of grievances and complaints from SEDGs students within 15 days through a dedicated Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC), while maintaining the complainant's safety, dignity, and confidentiality.



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Functions of the SEDGs Cell

1. Collaborate with other existing cells and statutory bodies within the HEIs to facilitate the effective implementation of Government of India and State-sponsored schemes, including scholarships and fellowships.
2. Ensure the execution of orientation programs, bridge courses, earn-while-learn schemes, and outreach initiatives specifically designed for SEDGs by the HEIs.
3. Provide socio-economic, academic, psychological support, and mentorship through structured counselling and guidance programmes.
4. Promote awareness and sensitization among faculty, staff, counsellors, and students regarding issues faced by SEDGs, encouraging their full inclusion in all academic and institutional activities.
5. Seek and mobilize funding from various sources such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and alumni contributions to provide additional financial support and scholarships for SEDGs, helping to reduce opportunity costs and educational expenses.
6. Coordinate with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to promote inclusive and equitable quality education through policy awareness and implementation.
7. Serve as a **single-window support system** for SEDGs students, addressing grievances and providing access to essential services, amenities, welfare schemes, scholarships, and fellowships.
8. Upload and widely disseminate information related to available facilities, welfare measures, and safety provisions for SEDGs on the HEI's official portal, while maintaining records to review and ensure a secure, supportive environment.
9. Publicize and facilitate access to existing support schemes such as remedial coaching, NET preparation, service-entry training, and residential coaching for SC/ST/OBC (non-creamy layer), minority communities, and students with disabilities (PwD).
10. Form a dedicated team comprising counsellors, social workers, and faculty to offer emotional and social support, helping SEDGs students adapt effectively to campus life.



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11. Promote holistic personality development by focusing on professional, soft, and life skills to enhance the employability of SEDGs students.
12. Conduct regular meetings to assess the implementation and progress of various schemes, and maintain a centralized database of such initiatives.
13. Identify the specific needs of SEDGs students and submit appropriate recommendations to the HEI authorities for action.
14. Raise awareness among faculty, staff, students, and service providers regarding the facilities and support systems available for SEDGs.
15. Foster positive attitudes among all students by organizing sensitization programs, ensuring active participation of SEDGs in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities.
16. Hold regular consultations with SEDGs student representatives to understand and address their concerns, while engaging with HEI authorities to ensure grievance resolution in a confidential and respectful manner.
17. Monitor and ensure timely resolution of all SEDGs-related grievances within a 15-day timeframe.
18. Inform all students during orientation or induction programs about the institution's **zero-tolerance policy** towards any form of discrimination.

SEDGs Cell Members

Sl.NO	Name	Designation	Position
1.	Dr.C.Emmy Prema	Principal	Chairperson
2.	Mr M.Merlin	AP/ECE	Member
3.	Ms. G. Marly	AP/ HoD/CSE	In-charge of Internal Complaint Committee
4.	Dr Praylin Selva Blessy S A	Associate Prof/HoD/ECE	IQAC Quardinator
5.	Dr. X. Roshan Xavier	AP/Automobile	SC/ST Representative
6.	Mr. S. Belfin Raj	AP/Civil	OBC Representative
7.	Ms. Verbeena R	III CSE	Student - Member
8.	Mr Dickson Samuel A	II EEE	Student - Member
9.	Dr. X. Roshan Xavier	AP/Automobile	Administrative Officer



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Guidelines to Provide Equitable Opportunity for the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in the HEIs



The University Grants Commission
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg
New Delhi – 110002
www.ugc.gov.in

Guidelines to Provide Equitable Opportunity for the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in the HEIs

January 2024



The University Grants Commission

Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg

New Delhi – 110002

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Foreword

The National Education Policy 2020 envisions a transformative approach to education, emphasising inclusive practices that cater to the diverse needs of learners. Inclusive education, as outlined in the NEP 2020, incorporates students with diverse backgrounds into mainstream education and emphasises creating an environment that enables, honours, and promotes diversity. One of the primary goals is to increase students' participation from socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) and their Gross Enrolment Ratio.

I am happy to announce the University Grants Commission Guidelines launch to ensure equitable access to higher education for SEDGs. This marks a significant step towards fulfilling the National Education Policy 2020 vision- an inclusive and vibrant education landscape where no talent is left behind. The UGC guidelines reflect the collective dedication to fostering inclusivity and ensuring that every aspiring student, regardless of socioeconomic background, has an equal opportunity at quality education.

By encouraging inclusive education, the Guidelines aim to ensure that every learner receives a quality education and is equipped with the skills needed in the 21st century, irrespective of their background or ability. Through initiatives like bridge courses, earn-while-learn schemes, and targeted outreach programmes, we aim to create multiple pathways for SEDGs to access quality education. UGC will encourage higher educational institutions to establish Equal Opportunity Cells (EOCs) on campuses to foster a supportive and inclusive environment free from discrimination and prejudice.

I invite the Higher Educational Institutions to take up this opportunity and make our higher education accessible to all. Together, we can create an education system that empowers minds, transforms lives, and builds a just and equitable society.



(Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar)

Chairman, University Grants Commission

19th January, 2024



प्रा. मनिष र. जोशी
सचिव

Prof. Manish R. Joshi
Secretary



सत्यमेव जयते



विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग
University Grants Commission
(शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)
(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)



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The Guidelines for the “Equitable Opportunity to the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in HEIs” has been prepared by the UGC, Expert Committee, consisting of Prof. Manikrao M. Salunkhe as Chairman of the Committee from Bharati Vidyapeeth, Pune, Prof. Avatthi Ramaiah, Dean, Equal Opportunity Centre & Faculty, Centre for Study of Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Dr. Himangshu Das, Director, National Institute for the Empowerment of Visual Disabilities, Dehradun (Uttarakhand), Prof. D. K. Verma, Director- Research, Extension & Training and Dean, School of Dr. Ambedkar Thought & Philosophy, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Mhow (Indore) Madhya Pradesh, Prof. Unnat P.Pandit Intellectual Property Management Cell, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Prof. Anil Prabhakar, Department of Electrical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, Chennai, Prof. Jawar Singh, Department of Electrical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Patna as members of the Committee. University Grants Commission acknowledges and appreciates the contributions of Expert Committee for preparing these guidelines.

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I am grateful to Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar, Hon’ble Chairman, University Grants Commission, for his guidance, advice, and continuous support in preparing this document. Lastly, I would like to thank all the members of the UGC family who have directly or indirectly contributed to the preparation of the document in the form of these guidelines.


Prof. Manish R. Joshi

New Delhi
January, 2024



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Guidelines to Provide Equitable Opportunity for the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in the HEIs

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Section - I

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)

1.1 Introduction:

Accessibility of quality education to all has been a major challenge in countries all over the world. In India, there are several disadvantaged groups, such as women, minorities, SCs and STs, OBCs, PwDs, EWSs, who lag behind others in the field of education. Taking all together in the development of the nation is the prime goal of the Government of India. Accordingly, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the need to address the issues of students belonging to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).

The students belonging to SEDGs face several challenges and difficulties in accessing quality education because of socio-cultural, economic, and historical reasons. The NEP 2020 has indicated people with the following identities as *Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups* (SEDGs) and emphasized on their increased participation, particularly in higher education:

(i) Gender Identity:

- Female (Girls and Women make up about half of all SEDGs and, in particular, those belonging to underrepresented groups have multiple disadvantages)
- Transgender.

(ii) Social Backwardness Identity:

- Scheduled Castes (SCs)
- Scheduled Tribes (STs)

(iii) Educational and Economic Backward Identity:

- Non-Creamy Layer among Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
- Economically Weaker Sections (EWSs)
- Students from the vernacular medium schools
- First Generation Learners

(iv) Minority Identity:

- Religious Minorities
- Linguistic Minorities

(v) Persons with Disabilities and Benchmark Disabilities.

- A person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment,
- A person with not less than forty percent of a specified disability as certified by the certifying authority.

(vi) Vulnerable and Low Socio-economic conditions:

- Migrant communities, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes
- Low-income households Below Poverty Line (BPL)
- Child beggars and Children in vulnerable situations

- Victims of or Children of victims of trafficking
- Students who lost their parents
- Any other group of low socio-economic conditions

(vii) Less-developed, poor-access, and disadvantaged locations:

- Villages and towns
- Tribal Areas /Scheduled Areas as mentioned in the V and VI Schedule under the Constitution of India
- Slums
- Aspirational Areas with Special Educational Zones (SEZs)
- North East States
- Islands
- Conflict Prone Areas
- Disaster-prone areas, including flood, drought, earthquake, etc.
- Border Areas

Accomplishing the goals of NEP 2020 is considered necessary to help India addressing effectively the challenges of her commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, particularly the challenges related to achieving SDG-4 (quality education), SDG-5 (gender equality), SDG-1 (no poverty), and SDG-8 (decent work and economic growth). These guidelines are meant to ensure that students belonging to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) have a safe and secure environment and equitable access to quality education in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), as specified in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and quality assessment of HEIs as under relevant criteria of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).

1.2 Objectives:

- a) Improving equitable access to quality education for SEDGs through bridge courses, earn-while-learn, and outreach programme;
- b) Extending and ensuring basic facilities and amenities to SEDGs for inclusive, healthy, safe, and secure environments on campuses; and
- c) Setting up SEDGs Cell for the purpose of sensitization of all stakeholders, policy implementation, monitoring, equalizing access to inclusive quality higher education, ensuring respectful dignity, promoting egalitarian and constitutional values, and grievance redressal in the HEIs.

The following measures are suggested in the NEP 2020 to achieve the above objectives:

1. Make admission processes more inclusive.
2. Make the curriculum more inclusive.
3. Develop bridge courses for students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds.
4. Ensure sensitization of faculty, counselors, and students on the gender-identity issue and its inclusion in all aspects of the HEI, including curricula.
5. Strictly enforce all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules.
6. Develop a road map that contains specific plans for action on increasing participation from SEDGs, including but not limited to the above items.

Section II

Interventions to make the HEIs Inclusive, Equitable, and Sensitive to SEDGs

There is a need to provide a robust framework to HEIs for formulating measures to make HEIs inclusive, equitable, and sensitive to students belonging to SEDGs. To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on SEDGs; the HEIs may undertake appropriate affirmative action such as Bridge Courses, Earn-while-Learn, Outreach programme, SEDGs Special Education Zones, and Sensitizing Stakeholders of HEIs. It is to ensure the implementation of these measures, primarily for making the HEIs more inclusive, equitable, and sensitive to SEDGs; the HEIs shall establish the SEDGs Cell. A brief account of each of these measures is given as follows:

2.1 Bridge Courses:

Bridge courses are helpful, especially for newly admitted students in the transition to studying in higher education institutions. It is aimed at helping the moderate and below moderate level students belonging to the SEDGs at the entry-level to bridge the gap between the subjects studied at the previous level and those to be examined at the entry level of the new academic programme that the students have been admitted to. It provides an adequate foundation in the core subjects so that such students do not have difficulty when the classes commence.

The bridge courses are intended to help the students of SEDGs category perform academically at par with other category students. Such courses are to be conducted every year before the commencement of the semester programme. The bridge courses (in physical or online mode) are to provide in advance, both primary and supplementary knowledge on the subjects taught to these students during the semesters. For this purpose, HEIs need to identify the SEDGs students who are required to undergo the bridge courses, and wherever possible, the bridge courses can be offered in the local languages. The bridge courses should be tailor-made to meet the requirements of SEDGs students, and a separate timetable should be prepared to deliver the content.

2.1.1 Objectives of Bridge courses:

1. To facilitate the students to overcome challenges in their learning process.
2. To assist students with different learning abilities and multiple challenges to perform at optimal level.
3. To act as a buffer for the new students.
4. To provide adequate time to the SEDGs students for smooth transition.
5. To provide knowledge on core courses and prepare the students for the identified courses which will commence in the forthcoming sessions/semesters.
6. To equip the students with the necessary knowledge and confidence to take on more challenges.

2.1.2 Measures to be taken by the HEIs:

The HEIs shall undertake some actionable steps to introduce relevant bridge courses. The infrastructural and other facilities in the HEIs shall be utilized to realize the objectives of the bridge courses. These shall include the following:

1. Bridge courses for students with learning difficulty and challenges could be conducted for all Semesters of all courses and for such duration as needed by SEDGs. These classes are conducted for students to assist them in achieving expected competencies in subjects. Bridge courses can also be taken from online platforms such as SWAYAM.
2. Orientation courses may be conducted for the freshers to enable them for smooth transition. These courses may include mathematics, computers, communication skills, accounting, etc., designed to connect a student's previous course.

2.1.3 Broad areas to enhance employability:

- a) The national development concerns, development perspectives, and priorities.
- b) Connect with the community, world of work, and global society.
- c) Self-empowerment, motivation, teamwork, and leadership development.
- d) Effective learning in a constructive and creative way with competence and confidence; life skills including effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, design thinking, creative thinking, critical and scientific thinking, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, equanimity, coping with stress, and resilience.
- e) Emerging career opportunities and challenges.
- f) E-learning resources and use of digital technology, application of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and responsible social media uses.

2.2 Earn-while-Learn Scheme

The *Earn-while-Learn* (EwL) scheme is a means to help the SEDGs students earn and support their education and acquire skills and capabilities that would enhance their employability. It attempts to mitigate the economic hardships of learning and enhance the learner's adaptability; both will improve the quality of education making it a purposeful endeavour. It provides the students opportunities to develop their personality, gain technical skills and build their entrepreneurial ability, which would help them take up professional assignments relatively faster. Under this scheme, opportunities for part-time engagement are provided to needy students. The indicative list of such engagement opportunities may

include working on research projects, assistantship, Library assignments, Computer services, Data entry, laboratory assistance, etc.

The effectiveness of any earn-while-learn program depends on its adherence to four foundational pillars: academic rigor, relevant work experience, student financial support, and stakeholders investment in programs. The pillars are held in place by a commitment to ensuring accountability, giving students the opportunity for career exploration and professional development, and conferring credentials.

2.2.1 Benefits of the Earn-while-Learn Scheme:

Some of the benefits that the students may access through the Earn-while-Learn scheme include the following:

1. It will enhance employability skills and career preparedness.
2. The Earn-while-Learn Scheme initiative will help to reduce the dropout rate.
3. The proper and effective implementation of the scheme will minimize parents' economic burden.
4. This initiative will have a positive impact on the student's career. On one hand, students will earn some extra money, while on the other, they will get work experience and hands-on training while studying, something that needs to be encouraged in our education system.
5. Acquisition of work experience and hands-on practice during learning.
6. It will provide means of education to socio-economically disadvantaged students.
7. It will make students more resourceful due to their work experience and acquire job skills.
8. It will open various career opportunities to take better jobs in the future and enhance employment prospects.
9. It will increase networking possibilities for the students.
10. It will facilitate students to acquire the requisite competence and attitude etc.
11. It will add value to the resume of students.

2.2.2 Opportunities:

HEIs may provide various part-time engagement opportunities to the students in any department of the HEIs. HEIs should create awareness among the students about such opportunities so that eligible students make use of these opportunities.

2.2.3 Remuneration:

The rate of remuneration for each of the students will be a consolidated amount on an hourly basis for the part-time service they render. Eligible students can be engaged up to a maximum of 20 hours per week, 20 days per month. The payment may be made on an actual basis. The services of the students may be planned in such a way that it does not affect their classes.

2.2.4 Steps to be taken by the HEIs:

- a. HEIs have to ensure flexibility to the students for acquiring knowledge and skills essential to earn a living while learning.
- b. Identify the types of work engagement on the campus that can be taken up by students in part-time mode, as per local needs and also in regional languages.

- c. Publicize the “Earn while Learn” opportunities widely.
- d. Draw a transparent selection process. Priority may be given to needy students.
- e. Institutions must collaborate with Government, Non-Government agencies and corporate sector for funding or seeking projects for implementing the scheme.
- f. Provide necessary weightage to the scheme by including it as a criterion for assessment and accreditation.
- g. Students engaged in “Earn while Learn” may be issued a certificate.

2.3 Outreach Programme - SEDGs Special Education Zones:

An outreach program aims to help, uplift, and support those who are in need of certain services. It involves learning, social planning, health support, and other projects for their empowerment.

Students from SEDGs require encouragement and support to make a successful transition to higher education. HEIs should strive to provide services such as language translation, recording services, and assistive technologies. HEIs need to mobilize resources to carry out this effectively. Professional, academic, and career counselling are to be made available to all the students; also counsellors to ensure the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of the students.

2.3.1 Steps to be taken by the HEIs:

- Institutions have to ensure students’ flexibility for outreach programme.
- Guidelines and principles relating to implementing the outreach programmes must be prepared.
- HEIs have to design the curriculum to embed outreach programmes.
- HEIs must collaborate with Government, Non-Government agencies and corporate sectors to conduct such outreach programmes.
- Yearly budgetary allocation could be made by HEIs for out-reach programmes.

2.4 Sensitizing the HEIs on Challenges related to SEDGs:

Appropriate sensitization programmes are to be introduced and regularly organized for all teachers, administrators, functionaries, and students of HEIs so that the latter become more open to valuing the relevance of inclusive policies such as reservation policy, etc. There is a need to adhere to the principles of inclusion and equity at all levels of the HEIs’ engagement with the SEDGs students, and it requires more sensitivity to the challenges faced by the SEDGs students, particularly concerning their self-respect, self-esteem, and dignity.

Section III

SEDGs Cell

All HEIs shall set up SEDGs Cell to ensure opportunities for inclusive, equal and quality higher education to the SEDGs students. SEDGs Cell shall function as an independent body, without any hindrance or interference to the functioning and mandated activities of other Cells in the HEIs.

SEDGs Cell within every HEIs shall ensure the protection of the constitutionally guaranteed rights, dignity, safety, and security of all individuals belonging to the SEDGs and also ensure them equalizing access and opportunities to pursue higher education with the help of the existing statutory bodies such as SC/ST Cell, Equal Opportunity Cell etc.

3.1 Objectives of SEDGs Cell:

1. To protect all the constitutional rights of the SEDGs students.
2. To ensure that the HEIs are inclusive, safe, and secure for the SEDGs students.
3. To provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring for the students belonging to the SEDGs through proper counselling and monitoring programme.
4. To ensure proper implementation and monitoring of orientation and bridge courses designed by the HEIs to benefit SEDGs students.
5. To ensure implementation of all such programme designed and developed by HEIs to increase the participation of SEDGs students in academic activities.
6. To ensure implementation of Government's policies, including reservation policies and various schemes, programme, facilities and guidelines for SEDGs students.
7. To ensure that the HEIs develop appropriate outreach programme to help the SEDGs students to avail the various opportunities of educational/academic programmes of HEIs.
8. To ensure proper implementation of preventive measures and Laws against discrimination and atrocities, and for safeguards of students belonging to respective categories under SEDGs.
9. To circulate, publicize, facilitate, and monitor the implementation of all UGC and Government guidelines and instructions issued from time to time in reference to SEDGs.
10. To redress the grievances and complaints of the SEDGs students within 15 days through a Grievances Redressal Committee (GRC) without compromising the safety, privacy and dignity of the complainant.

3.2 Functions of SEDGs Cell:

1. To co-ordinate with other existing cells and statutory bodies of the HEIs and enable implementation of the existing schemes and provisions, including scholarships and fellowships of the Govt. of India and respective States.
2. To ensure the implementation of orientation and bridge courses, earn-while-learn schemes, and outreach programme designed and developed by HEIs for SEDGs.

3. To provide socio-economic, academic, and psychological support and mentoring for such students through proper counselling and mentoring programme.
4. To ensure sensitization of faculty, staff, counsellors, and students on the SEDGs issues and their inclusion in all aspects of the HEIs.
5. To explore and generate funds from various sources like Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) and Alumni to provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs to mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education.
6. To coordinate with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to raise awareness about the implementation of various policies for inclusive and equitable quality higher education.
7. To work as a ‘Single Window’ for students belonging to SEDGs for their grievances, basic needs, amenities, facilities, welfare measures, and scholarships and fellowships.
8. To upload and disseminate guidelines, facilities, welfare, and safety measures on HEI’s portal and maintain such records to review and monitor amenities and basic facilities for a safe and secure environment for SEDGs.
9. To circulate, publicize, and facilitate existing welfare schemes like – Remedial, NET, entry into services, and residential Coaching for SC/ST/OBC (non-creamy layer), Minority Community, and PwD Students.
10. To establish a team of counsellors, social workers, and faculty members to provide emotional and social support to SEDGs to adapt to the environment of the HEI.
11. To focus on overall personality and skill development, including professional and soft skills, so as to ensure enhancing the student employability.
12. To organize periodic meetings and to monitor the progress of various schemes and all the HEIs may prepare a database of such schemes for SEDGs.
13. To assess the needs of SEDGs and make necessary recommendations to the authorities of the HEIs.
14. To make faculty, staff, students, and service professionals aware of facilities available for SEDGs.
15. To sensitize all the students to bring an attitudinal change towards SEDGs to ensure participation of SEDGs in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities in the HEIs.
16. To hold regular meetings with representatives of SEDG students to check their grievances and also meet with management/authorities of HEIs to facilitate discussion of the grievances of SEDG students and maintain the confidentiality of deliberations and data.
17. To review, monitor, and ensure disposal of all grievances within 15 days.
18. To inform all students during induction/counselling session about Zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination.

3.3 Governance of SEDGs Cell:

1	Chairperson. SEDGs Cell	
2	Senior Professor	Member
3	In-charge of Internal Complaint Committee	Member
4	Coordinator/Director of IQAC	Member
5	SC/ST Representative	Member
6	OBC Representative	Member
7	Two Students' Representative belonging to SEDGs	Members (one male and one female member)
8	Assistant Registrar/ Administrative Officer	Member Secretary

* Chairperson and members to be nominated by Head of the HEI

INDICATIVE GLOSSARY

Definitions/ Key-terms

The definitions mentioned in these guidelines are under those appearing in the relevant Gazette notifications, Government of India NEP 2020, and guidelines notified by the University Grants Commission, unless the context otherwise requires, as under:

1. The **Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)** are those who, for historical reasons and the causes of their prevailing disadvantaged social, economic, educational, vocational, and locational conditions, cannot have equal access to the various facilities and opportunities available for higher education.
2. The category “**Economically Weaker Section (EWS)**” refers to those sections of society that are not covered under the scheme of reservation for SC/ST/OBC and whose gross annual income from all sources (as per the existing criteria) is below Rs.8 lakhs for the financial year preceding the year of application for admission/recruitment.
3. The category “**Other Backward Classes**” refers to the class or classes of citizens who are socially and educationally backward and are so determined and listed by the Central Government or by State Governments in the respective list of OBCs.
4. As per the existing notification, the Creamy Layer status of an OBC student is determined based on the income status of their parents. Hence, under the SEDGs, eligible OBC students are those in the “non-Creamy layer,” which means the parents’ income of an OBC student has been below Rs.8 lakhs per annum during the last three consecutive years. (Ref. DoPT O.M. No 36033/1.2013-Estt. (Res.) dated 13th September 2017 (which may be amended from time to time).
5. “**Persons with Disabilities**” means a person with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders a person’s complete and adequate participation in society equally with others, as defined under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
6. “**Persons with benchmark Disabilities**” means a person with not less than forty percent of a specified disability where a specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms and includes persons with disabilities where a specified disability has been defined in measurable terms, as certified by the certifying authority.
7. “**Scheduled Castes**” means the Scheduled Castes, notified under Article 341 of the Constitution of India.
8. “**Scheduled Tribes**” means the Scheduled Tribes, notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India.
9. “**SEDGs Budget**” means the separate budget generated by HEIs from their own sources/ CSR/Voluntary/Donations for the welfare and benefit of students belonging to SEDGs.