



Thunchath Ezhuthachan
Malayalam University

Policy on
Barrier-Free Environment



1. Introduction

- This policy outlines Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University's commitment to create a barrier-free environment that promotes accessibility, inclusivity, and equal opportunities for all members of the university community, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors, in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act).

2. Objectives

- To remove physical, architectural, communication, and attitudinal barriers that hinder the full participation and engagement of individuals with disabilities.
- To comply with the requirements and provisions of the RPwD Act, 2016, and other relevant legislation, regulations, and guidelines pertaining to accessibility and disability rights in India.
- To foster a culture of awareness, respect, and support for individuals with disabilities within the university community.

3. Scope

- This policy applies to all buildings, facilities, programs, services, and activities provided or sponsored by Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University in India.
- It encompasses both physical and virtual environments, including classrooms, laboratories, offices, libraries, websites, and digital platforms, with specific consideration for the unique needs and challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the Indian context.

4. Principles of Accessibility

- **Rights-Based Approach:** Recognizing the rights of persons with disabilities to access education, employment, and other opportunities on an equal basis with others, as enshrined in the RPwD Act, 2016, and related legislation.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Acknowledging the diversity of disability experiences and cultural perspectives within the Indian context, and ensuring that accessibility initiatives are culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of diverse communities.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging with disability rights organizations, advocacy groups, and stakeholders from the disability community to inform and guide accessibility

initiatives, and to promote collaboration and partnership in advancing disability rights and inclusion.

5. Responsibilities

- **University Administration:** The university administration is responsible for establishing and enforcing accessibility policies, allocating resources for accessibility initiatives, and ensuring compliance with the RPwD Act, 2016, and other relevant legislation and guidelines.
- **Facilities Management:** The facilities management department is responsible for maintaining accessible infrastructure, including ramps, elevators, signage, parking spaces, and restrooms, in accordance with the Accessible India Campaign and National Building Code of India.
- **Information Technology (IT) Services:** The IT department is responsible for ensuring that digital platforms, websites, online courses, and electronic documents are accessible to individuals with disabilities, in compliance with the Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.
- **Human Resources:** The human resources department is responsible for providing reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities, facilitating disability awareness training, and promoting an inclusive workplace culture, as mandated by the RPwD Act, 2016, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017.
- **Student Services:** The student services department is responsible for providing academic accommodations, assistive technology, and support services to students with disabilities, as well as promoting disability awareness and advocacy on campus, in accordance with the University Grants Commission (UGC) Guidelines for Students with Disabilities.

6. Accessibility Standards and Guidelines

- Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University shall adhere to relevant accessibility standards, guidelines, and best practices established by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and other relevant authorities in India.

- The university shall regularly review and update its accessibility policies and practices to reflect changes in legislation, technology, and societal norms, and to ensure compliance with Indian accessibility standards and guidelines.

7. Accessibility Features and Accommodations

- The university shall provide a range of accessibility features and accommodations to meet the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, including:
- Accessible parking spaces, ramps, elevators, and restrooms in all buildings and facilities, in compliance with the Accessible India Campaign and National Building Code of India.
- Braille signage, tactile maps, and auditory cues for navigation, as per the Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017.
- Captioning, transcripts, and audio descriptions for multimedia content, in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and Indian accessibility standards.
- Assistive technology, adaptive equipment, and alternate formats for learning materials, as recommended by disability experts and stakeholders from the disability community in India.
- Requests for specific accommodations shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and reasonable accommodations shall be provided in a timely manner, as required by the RPwD Act, 2016, and related legislation.

8. Awareness and Training

- Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University shall conduct awareness campaigns, training sessions, and workshops on disability rights, accessibility principles, and inclusive practices for faculty, staff, students, and other members of the university community, in accordance with the RPwD Act, 2016, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017.
- Training programs may cover topics such as disability etiquette, accessible communication, creating inclusive learning environments, and utilizing assistive technology, with specific consideration for the cultural context and diversity of disability experiences in India.

9. Complaints and Grievances

- The university shall establish procedures for addressing complaints, grievances, and concerns related to accessibility issues, in accordance with the RPwD Act, 2016, and related legislation.
- Individuals who encounter barriers to access or experience discrimination based on disability shall have access to a formal complaint process and avenues for resolution, including mediation, arbitration, or legal recourse if necessary, as provided for under the RPwD Act, 2016.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The university shall establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating compliance with accessibility policies, assessing the effectiveness of accessibility features and accommodations, and soliciting feedback from individuals with disabilities and other stakeholders, in accordance with the RPwD Act, 2016, and related legislation.
- Regular audits, accessibility assessments, and user testing shall be conducted to identify areas for improvement and ensure continuous progress towards a barrier-free environment, in line with Indian accessibility standards and guidelines.

11. Review and Amendment

- This policy shall be subject to periodic review to ensure its relevance, effectiveness, and compliance with the RPwD Act, 2016, and other relevant legislation and guidelines in India.
- Amendments to the policy may be proposed by university stakeholders and will be subject to approval by the appropriate university authority, in consultation with disability rights organizations, advocacy groups, and stakeholders from the disability community.

12. Conclusion

- Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University is committed for promoting accessibility, inclusivity, and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities in India, and to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where all members of the university community can thrive, in accordance with the RPwD Act, 2016, and related legislation and guidelines.