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Medhavi Skills University

POLICY ON MINIMISATION OF DISPOSABLE ITEMS

W.e.f.: 19th November 2024

Medhavi Skills University, Sikkim, is committed to environmental sustainability, responsible consumption, resource efficiency and the reduction of waste generated through its institutional activities. The University recognises that excessive dependence on disposable products, particularly single-use plastics and other short-life materials, contributes to waste generation, resource depletion and environmental pollution.

The University shall promote the progressive reduction of unnecessary disposable items across its academic, administrative, residential and service operations. It shall encourage the adoption of reusable products, sustainable procurement practices, responsible event management and appropriate recycling arrangements to minimise the environmental footprint of campus activities.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Reduce the consumption of unnecessary disposable and single-use items across the University.
2. Promote reusable, durable, recyclable and environmentally preferable alternatives wherever practicable.
3. Minimise plastic waste and the environmental impacts associated with disposable products.
4. Integrate waste minimisation principles into procurement, catering, events, housekeeping and campus operations.
5. Encourage responsible consumption and environmentally conscious behaviour among students, faculty, employees, vendors and visitors.
6. Establish monitoring and documentation mechanisms to assess progress in reducing disposable-item consumption.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all University departments, offices, classrooms, laboratories, hostels, cafeterias, meeting rooms, event venues and other institutional facilities. It also applies to procurement activities, conferences, workshops, celebrations, student activities, outsourced services and vendors operating on University premises.

All faculty members, students, employees, contractors, catering providers, housekeeping personnel, event organisers and other campus stakeholders are encouraged to support the objectives of this policy and adopt responsible practices within their respective areas of operation.

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Policy Provisions

Reduction of Single-Use Items

The University shall discourage the unnecessary use of disposable cups, plates, cutlery, straws, plastic bags, water bottles, food containers and other short-life products in its offices, cafeterias, hostels, meetings and campus events.

Departments and service providers shall identify opportunities to eliminate avoidable disposable items and adopt practical alternatives. Applicable legal restrictions on identified single-use plastic products shall be observed.

Promotion of Reusable Alternatives

The University shall encourage the use of durable and reusable materials, including stainless-steel utensils, reusable cups, refillable water bottles, washable serving equipment and reusable food containers.

Cafeterias, food-service providers and event organisers shall be encouraged to use reusable serving materials wherever feasible, subject to hygiene, food safety and operational requirements. Water dispensers and refill stations may be promoted where suitable infrastructure is available.

Sustainable Procurement Practices

Procurement decisions shall consider product durability, reusability, packaging requirements, recyclability and environmental impact, wherever practicable and consistent with applicable procurement procedures.

Departments shall be encouraged to avoid unnecessary purchases of disposable products and prefer reusable alternatives for routine institutional activities. Vendors and suppliers may be encouraged to minimise excessive packaging, avoid avoidable single-use materials and offer environmentally preferable products.

Sustainable Events and Meetings

The University shall promote responsible resource use during seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings, cultural programmes, celebrations and other institutional events.

Event organisers shall, wherever practicable:

- Use digital invitations, registration systems, notices and event materials to reduce paper consumption.
- Provide reusable cups, plates and cutlery instead of disposable serving items.
- Use water dispensers or refill facilities instead of routinely distributing single-use water bottles.
- Avoid unnecessary disposable decorations, packaging and promotional materials.

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- Arrange appropriate segregation and collection of waste generated during events.

These measures shall be implemented according to event requirements, hygiene considerations and the availability of suitable facilities.

Responsible Catering and Campus Services

Cafeterias, hostels, catering contractors and other campus service providers shall be encouraged to minimise disposable packaging and serving materials. Preference should be given to reusable food-service equipment and appropriate bulk-serving arrangements wherever feasible.

The University shall encourage service providers to review their consumption of disposable products periodically and identify practical measures for reducing unnecessary use. Hygiene, food safety and applicable health regulations shall remain essential considerations.

Waste Segregation and Recycling

Disposable items that cannot reasonably be eliminated shall be managed responsibly. The University shall encourage segregation of waste at source and ensure that recyclable materials are directed to appropriate collection and recycling channels, where available.

Disposable products shall not be littered, openly burned or disposed of in a manner that causes environmental pollution. Procurement and operational decisions should prioritise waste prevention over reliance on end-of-life disposal alone.

Awareness and Stakeholder Participation

The University shall promote awareness of the environmental impacts of disposable products through orientation programmes, notices, posters, digital communications, workshops and campus campaigns.

Students, faculty, employees, vendors and visitors shall be encouraged to carry reusable bottles, avoid unnecessary disposable products and participate in waste-reduction initiatives. Departments and student groups may support periodic campaigns to promote responsible consumption and a cleaner campus environment.

Roles and Responsibilities

The University administration, through its designated environmental or sustainability committee or officer, shall coordinate implementation, promote awareness and periodically review progress.

Heads of departments shall encourage compliance within their respective units. Procurement personnel shall consider opportunities to reduce disposable-item purchases, while cafeteria operators, hostel managers, event organisers and outsourced service providers shall adopt appropriate waste-minimisation

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practices. Students and employees shall contribute through responsible consumption and adherence to campus guidelines.

Documentation and Reporting

The University shall encourage periodic assessment of disposable-item consumption and document initiatives undertaken to reduce their use. Relevant evidence may include procurement records, vendor instructions, event checklists, photographs of reusable alternatives, awareness programme reports, waste-management records and departmental progress reports.

Where feasible, the University may establish baseline consumption data and annual reduction targets for selected items, such as disposable cups, plates, cutlery, plastic packaging and bottled water used during institutional events.

The designated committee or officer may review implementation periodically, identify areas requiring improvement and recommend corrective measures. Documented progress shall support institutional sustainability reporting and assessment of relevant SDG contributions.

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required, to ensure continued relevance and alignment with applicable environmental regulations, institutional priorities and evolving sustainable consumption and waste-management practices.