AMITY UNIVERSITY MAHARASHTRA

Established vide Maharashtra Act No.13 of 2014, of Government of Maharashtra, and recognized under Section 2 (f) of UGC Act 1956.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK & POLICY FOR MENTORING, COUNSELLING, AND PEER SUPPORT

Comprehensive Support Architecture for Students, Faculty, and Staff from Underrepresented, Marginalized, and Vulnerable Groups (SC/ST, OBC, Minorities, Women, LGBTQIA+, Divyangjan, and Low-Income Backgrounds)

Statutory Compliance:	UGC Guidelines for Equal Opportunity Cells.
Apex Oversight Bodies:	Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC), SC/ST Cell, Dean Student Welfare (DSW)
Target Demographics:	Students, Faculty, and Staff from Underrepresented & Marginalized Backgrounds

1. Executive Summary & Policy Statement

Official Affirmation: Amity University Mumbai (AUM), established under Maharashtra Act No. XIII of 2014 and recognized under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act 1956, explicitly commits to fostering an inclusive, egalitarian, and socially conscious academic environment. The University recognizes that individuals from underrepresented backgrounds—including Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC non-creamy layer), religious/linguistic minorities, female and non-binary individuals, first-generation learners, economically disadvantaged groups, and persons with benchmark disabilities (Divyangjan)—often face distinct psycho-social, socio-economic, and systemic transitions.

To counter historical and structural disparities, AUM maintains a tripartite ecosystem consisting of: (1) Structured Faculty Mentorship via the Amizone Mentor-Mentee Scheme, (2) Professional Psychological and Guidance Counselling led by the Amity Institute of Behavioral & Allied Sciences (AIBAS) and the AUM Counselling Centre, and (3) Peer Mentoring and Affinity Support Networks coordinated under the Dean of Student Welfare (DSW) and Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC). This document establishes institutional provisions accessible to students, administrative staff, and teaching faculty alike.

2. Scope & Target Underrepresented Groups

This policy guarantees targeted guidance, non-discriminatory mentoring, and dedicated psychological scaffolding across the following university constituencies:

- **SC & ST Communities:** Students and staff belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes entitled to constitutional protections.
- **OBC & Religious/Linguistic Minorities:** Non-creamy layer OBC students and recognized minority communities navigating academic assimilation and government scholarship avenues.
- **Women & Gender Minorities:** Female students, research scholars, and female faculty/staff addressing gender disparity, leadership hurdles, or safety concerns.
- **Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan):** Students and employees with physical, visual, auditory, neurodivergent (ADHD, Autism Spectrum), or learning disabilities.

- **First-Generation & Rural Scholars:** Students who are the first in their families to attend higher education, addressing academic culture-shock, digital divides, and soft-skill development.
- **Economically Disadvantaged Cohorts:** Students from economically weaker sections (EWS) requiring fee-concession counseling, livelihood assistance, and book-bank linkages.

3. Institutional Mentoring Programmes

Mentoring at Amity University Mumbai operates as a formal, embedded institutional responsibility rather than an ad-hoc gesture. The framework includes specialized tracks for underrepresented cohorts:

3.1 The Amizone Faculty Mentor-Mentee

Framework Structure: Every admitted student at AUM is assigned a dedicated Faculty Mentor upon enrolment, maintaining an average ratio of 1:15 to 1:20 (with sensitive cohorts receiving 1:5 to 1:6 focused faculty engagement). The interaction is digitally monitored and archived on the intranet system (AMIZONE).

- **Proactive Early Identification:** Faculty mentors identify learning gaps, transition anxieties, and communication barriers among underrepresented mentees during early diagnostic reviews.
- **Scheduled Interaction Cadence:** Mentors hold mandatory bi-weekly one-on-one sessions to review holistic progress, hostel adjustment, peer relations, and emotional security.
- **AMIZONE Digital Tracking:** All mentoring notes, welfare interventions, and referrals to psychological or remedial cells are logged securely on AMIZONE with strict role-based confidentiality.

3.2 Remedial & Academic Mentoring

- **Bilingual Academic Tutorials:** Organized in fundamental subjects, English proficiency, and quantitative reasoning for students from vernacular mediums and disadvantaged school backgrounds.
- **National Competitive Exam Guidance:** Assistance provided by the Equal Opportunity Cell to prepare SC/ST/OBC/Minority scholars for UGC-NET, CSIR, GATE, and civil services.

3.3 Faculty & Staff Mentorship Pathways

- **Early-Career Academic Mentoring:** Junior faculty members from underrepresented backgrounds are paired with senior Professors and Deans to navigate research grants, Scopus/UGC-Care publications, and tenure milestones.
- **Non-Teaching Staff Career Pathways:** Administrative and technical staff from minority or reserved cadres receive workplace onboarding, statutory rights orientation, and career advancement mentorship.

4. Professional Guidance & Counselling Ecosystem

Counselling at AUM is anchored by professional clinical psychologists and licensed counselors operating independently of punitive or administrative structures to guarantee complete psychological safety.

4.1 AUM Counselling Centre ('Way For Well-Being')

Clinical Core: Operated by the Amity Institute of Behavioral & Allied Sciences (AIBAS)—Maharashtra's premier institute offering Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)-approved clinical psychology programs—the center provides free, confidential psychological services to all students, staff, and faculty.

- **Soundproof Private Cabins:** Dedicated counseling cabins ensuring complete acoustic and visual privacy for individuals discussing discrimination, depression, social anxiety, or trauma.
- **Expert Multidisciplinary Team:** Headed by senior psychology professors and supported by 9+ certified faculty counsellors, clinical psychologists, and resident psychotherapists.
- **Daily Operating Hours:** Walk-in and pre-scheduled appointments on weekdays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, with dedicated emergency protocol for after-hours psychological crises.

4.2 Specialized Counselling Modalities for Underrepresented Cohorts

- **Minority & Identity Affirming Therapy:** Targeted therapy addressing imposter syndrome, stereotype threat, social isolation, and discrimination trauma experienced by minority and marginalized students.
- **Gender & Survivor Support:** Confidential, trauma-informed psychological first-aid for victims of sexual harassment, domestic abuse, or gender-based violence, liaising directly with the ICC.
- **Neurodiversity & LD Assessment:** A specialized clinical facility equipped with Cog-Labs and 200+ standardized psychometric tests to evaluate and support students with learning differences.

5. Peer Support & Student Affinity Networks

Recognizing that horizontal peer connections are critical for reducing attrition and social alienation, AUM actively facilitates student-led peer support networks.

- **Amity Peer Buddy Initiative:** Senior high-achieving students from diverse social and regional backgrounds are trained as 'Amity Peer Buddies' to assist incoming juniors from similar backgrounds with campus assimilation.
- **Residential Life Peer Circles:** Hostel floor representatives liaise with the Chief Warden to ensure minority and outstation students feel welcomed, secure, and integrated in dining and residential spaces.
- **Mental Health Advocacy Groups:** Student-led awareness campaigns such as the monthly 'Psych Insight' publication and campus wellness drives that normalize help-seeking and demystify mental health among marginalized communities.

6. Specialized Support Bodies & Institutional Oversight

The implementation of mentoring, counseling, and equal access is monitored by statutory committees:

Institutional Body	Primary Mandate & Scope	Reporting Authority
SC/ST Welfare Cell	Addresses grievances, monitors reservation compliance, and provides welfare and scholarship counseling.	Liaison Officer / Registrar
Internal Complaints Committee	Enforces POSH Act 2013, handles	Presiding Officer / VC

(ICC)	gender harassment cases, and offers safety mentoring for female staff & students.	
AUM Counselling Centre (AIBAS)	Provides professional psychological counseling, cognitive testing, crisis intervention, and mental health workshops.	Head of AIBAS / DSW

7. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Accessing Support

Students, staff, and faculty seeking mentoring or counseling can activate support through any of the following distinct pathways:

- **Pathway A (Self-Initiated Digital):** Raise a support request directly through the AMIZONE Intranet portal under the 'Mentoring / Grievance Redressal' tab.
- **Pathway B (Clinical Counseling Walk-In):** Walk directly into the AUM Counselling Centre at the AIBAS Complex (Mon–Fri, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM) or email the counseling coordinator (aibas@mum.amity.edu).
- **Pathway C (Mentor / Peer Referral):** Faculty mentors observing chronic withdrawal, academic decline, or distress can refer students directly to the Counselling Centre with student consent.
- **Pathway D (Statutory Cell Intervention):** Direct representation to the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunity Cell or the SC/ST Liaison Officer for socio-academic, cultural, or administrative grievances.

8. Confidentiality, Anti-Retaliation, and Non-Discrimination

Absolute Confidentiality: All mentoring logs involving sensitive personal backgrounds and all clinical counseling records are strictly confidential and protected by professional ethical standards. Information shared during counseling sessions is never entered into academic transcripts, personnel files, or disciplinary logs, except in scenarios involving imminent danger to life.

Zero-Tolerance Against Retaliation: Any retaliation, harassment, academic victimization, or hostile work behavior directed against any individual seeking mentoring, psychological assistance, or lodging a discrimination grievance constitutes severe gross misconduct resulting in disciplinary termination or expulsion under university statutes.

9. Student Scholarship Web page

https://www.amity.edu/mumbai/scholarship-scheme