**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion policy**

**Policy Number:**

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| Prepared and Proposed By | Deepa Murali – Advisor |
| Reviewed and Recommended By | John Alex – Trustee |
| Approved By | Board of trustee |
| Date of Approval | 27 – March – 2025 |

**Purpose**

The purpose of the diversity, equity, and inclusion policy is to set out Varshini Illam Trust’s (VIT) commitment to providing a workplace free from d­­­­­iscrimination for employees. The policy also sets out VIT’s expectations, where each employee has a responsibility to adhere to and uphold the policy.

VIT thus recognizes the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We operate in a diverse society, and we understand that they diverse characteristics and different experiences, needs, and aspirations.

**Scope**

The policy applies to all employees, interns, probationers, retainers, consultants, trainees, and those contracted to work at, or for, VIT or its subsidiaries.

**Version Control**

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| 1.0 | 27- March-2025 | Board of Trustee |

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1. **Objective**

VIT is committed to embedding equity and inclusion in all practices. It aims to establish an inclusive culture, which celebrates diversity, is free from discrimination and is based on our values framework.

**Principles of the policy:**

This policy seeks to ensure that all who are subject to VIT’s policies, practices and processes are treated fairly and are not treated less favorably on the grounds of age, race, religion, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital status, gender, gender identity/ expression, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected under any law or ordinance or regulation.

We strive to provide a diverse and inclusive workforce where each individual feels valued and empowered. Individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, attitudes, and experiences bring fresh ideas and perspectives. Current examples include:

1. **Dignity at work:** We strive towards making our policies and processes, to be inclusive of all, irrespective of their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. e.g., dress code policy, Leave Policy.
2. **Work-life balance policies:** These include a range of flexible working initiatives, parental leave, and childcare. While every effort will be made to accommodate requests for flexible/alternative working arrangements, consideration must be given to the organizations work priorities.
3. **Diversity awareness training:** awareness and sensitization programs are arranged on a regular basis for VIT employees to reinforce our policies around equity and diversity and reminding them about being sensitive to diverse needs of colleagues and customers.
4. **Recruitment and selection:** the principles of equity and diversity are central to making sure that VIT attracts the best talent. We ensure that all methods used to attract and select candidates are free from bias.
5. **Responsibility**

**VIT’s Trustees and Diversity and Inclusion Councils are responsible for:**

* + Leading and supporting VIT in creating an inclusive and diverse environment.
  + Ensuring effective policies and processes are in place to support VIT fulfilling its equity and diversity vision.
  + Providing advice, guidance, and support for the implementation of this policy.
  + Advising colleagues to address equity related issues at workplace.

**Managers are responsible for:**

* + Ensuring that the policies and processes relating to employee recruitment, selection, career development, discipline, and grievance are conducted in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equity and eliminate discrimination.
  + Ensuring employees are encouraged and enabled to reach their full potential.

**Employees are responsible for:**

* + Upholding and implementing the aims of this policy
  + Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity.

Refraining from engaging in any kind of conversation, discussion or activity that indicates explicit or implicit bias towards any section of employees **Violation of the Policy**

Violation of this policy will have consequences as per the Malpractice Matrix.

Employees who believe they have been subjected to any kind of discrimination that conflicts with VIT’s diversity, equity and inclusion policy and initiatives should seek assistance from their immediate reporting manager or an HR Manager.

1. **Supporting Policies** 
   1. **Equal employment and opportunity policy:** This policy is framed with a view to providing equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities.
   2. **Flexible Workplace & Timings:** A range of leave options is available to our employees to ensure they have appropriate options for time off work. This includes annual leave, casual leave, and parental leave.
   3. **Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy:** VIT is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. VIT is committed to supporting and maintaining a healthy and safe workplace which promotes the physical and mental wellbeing of our employees.
   4. **Learning and development opportunities:** Our Learning and Development programs are a key enabler of organizational objectives including Diversity & Inclusion targets and developing a strong and diverse pipeline of talent for succession planning.
2. **Promoting Diversity and Inclusion**

* **Delivering on gender equality:** VIT is committed to ensuring that gender is not a barrier to career opportunities and advancement. Gender equality brings unique talents, strengths, and skills into the workplace, which can improve collaboration and result in a stimulating and creative environment. We believe that through gender balanced diverse leadership and talent pipelines, we can better represent the needs of the work we do in the community.
* **Representing the changing demographics of our customers:** As the population becomes more culturally diverse, we are committed to ensuring our workforce is representative of our community so we can better anticipate their needs. We are committed to local talent sourcing to enable this deep community to connect. These are supported by strong recruitment and selection practices, which ensure bias is eliminated at all levels of the organization (including vacancies, restructurings, and promotions). Recruitment and selection practices are also designed to consider a balance of gender and other forms of diversity in the range of candidates. This is further supported by talent and development practices which ensure that, where possible, the pool of potential available talent is nurtured and developed effectively.
* **Implementation and Measurable Objectives:** The organization believes that this policy contributes to achieving our Organization objectives and embeds the importance and value of diversity and inclusion. The Trustees will review and approve measurable objectives for diversity and inclusion, including gender diversity, across, and at various levels of, our organization.

1. **Exceptions, Review and Revision**

* Exceptions from the aforesaid guidelines will require approval of the trustees.

1. **Review and revision**

* This policy would be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier based on needs. The recommended changes would be approved by the Trustees.