

7.3.1 UNIVERSITY DISTINCTIVENESS

1. SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Sustainable practices in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) encourage environmental responsibility and effective resource management, helping to cultivate a culture of sustainability within the campus community. Pondicherry University strongly believes in these practices and prepares future leaders to tackle global environmental issues. Few notable and unique practices in the campus include Green Audit initiative, Comprehensive Green Protocol that governs various aspects such as construction, demolition, and waste management.

Establishment of Office of Green Campus

Pondicherry University has firmly embraced the UGC Quality Mandate to address the climate crisis and safeguard the natural resources and surrounding environment of the campus. The Office of Green Campus has outlined the operational framework emphasizing four key principles:

1. Environmental Justice (Fundamental Duties, Article 51-A (g)),
2. The Precautionary Principle (Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration),
3. The Tipping Theory (focused on promoting positive actions), and
4. The concept of Picking Low Hanging Fruit (acknowledge the impact of small actions).

The scope of the initiative is crafted with carefully woven strategies, emphasizing easily achievable outcomes for the protection and conservation of the campus's natural resources. Simultaneously, the initiative aims to instigate a "change in attitude" among students and stakeholders under five key areas: Awareness Creation, Green Initiatives, Standard Operation & transformation, Dissemination, and Fundraising & Outreach. The Office of Green Campus, Pondicherry University drafted and conducted the following:

- Comprehensive Green Protocol for Educational Institutions, Residences, Industries, and Others
- Green Protocol for Wetlands
- Standard Operating Procedure for the Elimination of Single Use Plastic
- Conduct of Green Audit adhering to the NAAC Guidelines

Along with this, one more important initiative in bringing the policies and sub-policies for the Sustainable Development goals have been formulated by the collaborative and constructive efforts of Office of Green Campus, IQAC and Goal Specific SDG coordinators.

Solar Panels

Installing rooftop solar panels of 2.4 MW in the Pondicherry University is a forward-thinking move towards sustainability and energy self-sufficiency and one of the largest affordable and clean energy generation in an educational institution in India. By harnessing solar energy, Pondicherry University reduces dependence on fossil fuels, decrease energy expenses, and significantly lower the carbon footprints. This initiative promotes environmental responsibility while offering students practical learning opportunities in renewable energy and sustainability.

Sewage Treatment Plant (STP)

Pondicherry University has implemented an integrated and sustainable water management system focused on minimizing anthropogenic water discharge from human activities. A key component of this system is the STP. An eco-friendly wetland type STP is part of this strategy. The STP is funded by the Ministry of Education (MoE) under the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) and is being implemented in three phases. On a daily basis, about 7 lakhs litres per day gets treated and will be used for horticultural activities, which helps reduce water usage within the university premises.

2. DAY CARE CENTRE AND PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL

A child care facility in the name of Day Care Centre and Pre-Primary Education through its Pre-Primary School on the campus which is monitored by the School of Education of the University. Day care is designed to support the children of university employees (faculty and staff) as well as married research scholars. Pre - Primary School is meant for the wards of university employees however any vacant seats are also filled up by children other than wards of the university employees.

The day care centre is staffed by trained and dedicated caretakers, assisted by helpers. Additionally, school-aged children are also allowed to use the Day Care Centre during the summer vacation. Children at the centre are engaged in a variety of activities such as playing, learning good habits, participating in organized activities, singing nursery rhymes, and playing with toys and indoor activities.

Learning is made enjoyable and stress-free through play-based approaches, ensuring a smooth transition to top-quality primary education. A specially designed progress card tracks the child's development across all aspects of their personality. The classrooms are air-conditioned and equipped with computers, LCD projectors, and home theatres. Regular parent-teacher meetings are held to ensure ongoing communication.

3. SATELLITE CAMPUSES

Pondicherry University's satellite campuses play a crucial role in expanding access to quality higher education across various regions covering remote locations. These campuses are strategically located at Port Blair, Karaikal and Lakshadweep in order to support the students who cannot attend the main campus. These campuses offer specialized and professional programmes that address the unique needs of local communities. By decentralizing education, the university enables students from diverse geographical areas to access its academic resources without relocating. The satellite campuses maintain the same high standards as that of the main campus, featuring experienced faculty, modern facilities, and a focus on holistic development. They also contribute to regional progress by promoting educational opportunities, research, and community involvement. Pondicherry University's satellite campuses enhance the university's mission of providing quality education and disseminating knowledge across different regions.

4. STUDENT DIVERSITY

Pondicherry University is renowned for its diverse student population, drawing learners from across India and around the world. This diversity creates a dynamic, multicultural campus that enriches the overall university experience. Students from various cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds come together to exchange ideas and perspectives, promoting inclusivity and global awareness and making a wealthy campus of cultural diversity, while enriching the academic and social environment. The presence of students from various states also creates a sense of unity in diversity, as they share experiences and learn from one another,

preparing them for life in a diverse and interconnected world. They contribute unique perspectives, traditions, and languages, fostering a multi-cultural atmosphere where ideas are exchanged and celebrated.

The university's dedication to ensuring equal opportunities for all students is reflected in its inclusive policies, scholarships, and supportive environment. By embracing diversity, Pondicherry University equips its graduates with the skills to thrive in a globalized world, fostering tolerance, empathy, and cross-cultural communication. The university's vibrant and inclusive community stands as a testament to its commitment to creating a rich and dynamic educational experience for all students.