VINAYAKA MISSION'S
RESEARCH FOUNDATION
(Deemed to be University under section 3 of the UGC Act 1956)



Policy for Minimization of Plastics

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POLICY FOR MINIMIZATION OF PLASTICS

Drafted by	Dy. Director-Research
Verified by	Director I/c, Accreditation & Ranking
Passed by	Vice-Chancellor
Approved by	Executive Council
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VINAYAKA MISSION'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
POLICY FOR MINIMIZATION OF PLASTICS

1. Preamble

Vinayaka Mission's Research Foundation (Deemed to be University) [VMRF (DU)] recognizes the environmental impacts associated with unnecessary plastic consumption, littering and inadequate waste management. The University is committed to responsible resource use, prevention of avoidable waste, and the adoption of practical alternatives across its campuses and operations. This Policy establishes a coordinated framework to reduce plastic use, especially unnecessary single-use plastics, and to ensure that plastic waste is segregated and channelled to appropriate recycling or other lawful management routes.

The Policy supports the principles of responsible consumption and production under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 and shall be implemented in accordance with applicable Indian laws, rules, notifications and directions of competent authorities.

2. Short Title and Commencement

a. This policy shall be called as **"Policy for Minimization of Plastics**" in University Operations.

b. This policy shall come into force from the date of approval of the Executive Council of the University.

3. Purpose

- Reduce unnecessary plastic consumption and the amount of plastic waste generated across VMRF (DU).
- Phase out the use, procurement, distribution or supply of identified prohibited single-use plastic items in accordance with applicable law.
- Promote reusable alternatives and reduce avoidable plastic packaging.
- Improve segregation, collection, recycling and documented handover of plastic waste.
- Encourage sustainable procurement, supplier cooperation and responsible practices among students, staff, visitors and contractors.
- Build awareness, measure progress and support continual improvement in campus sustainability.

4. Scope and Applicability

This Policy applies to all VMRF (DU) campuses, constituent colleges, hospitals and healthcare facilities, academic departments, research centres, laboratories, libraries, offices, hostels, cafeterias, canteens, retail outlets, maintenance areas, events and other University-controlled premises and activities.

It applies to students, faculty, employees, researchers, clinicians, visitors, contractors, caterers, vendors, suppliers and other service providers. Where clinical care, laboratory work, infection prevention, product integrity or safety requires a plastic item, its use may continue where justified; such use must comply with applicable law and the relevant healthcare, laboratory, biomedical-waste or safety procedure.

5. Policy Statement

VMRF (DU) shall progressively minimize unnecessary plastic use through prevention, reduction, reuse and recycling, in that order where practicable. The University shall not procure, distribute, sell or use single-use plastic items prohibited by applicable Indian law. Departments and vendors shall avoid unnecessary plastic packaging, promote reusable alternatives where safe and feasible, provide appropriate waste-segregation facilities, and ensure that collected plastic waste is handed over through authorized or otherwise lawful channels. Plastic reduction shall not compromise patient safety, infection prevention, laboratory integrity, food safety or other essential operational requirements.

6. Objectives

- Reduce the purchase and consumption of unnecessary single-use plastic products.
- Increase the use of reusable bottles, bags, containers, crockery and serviceware where suitable.
- Promote drinking-water refill facilities to reduce dependence on disposable plastic bottles.
- Integrate plastic minimization into procurement, vendor agreements, catering, events and routine operations.
- Provide accessible, clearly identified collection points and improve segregation of recyclable plastic waste.
- Educate the campus community and encourage participation in plastic-reduction initiatives.

- Monitor plastic purchasing, waste generation and recycling performance and report progress annually.

7. Definitions

- Plastic: A material within the meaning of the applicable Plastic Waste Management Rules and amendments.
- Single-use plastic item: A plastic product intended for one use or a short period before disposal; the term does not itself establish that every such item is legally prohibited.
- Identified prohibited single-use plastic item: An item whose manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale or use is prohibited under applicable Indian law or notification.
- Plastic packaging waste: Plastic packaging discarded after use, to be managed through the applicable collection, recycling and extended producer responsibility framework.
- Reusable alternative: An item designed and suitable for repeated use, with appropriate cleaning, maintenance and safe handling.
- Authorized waste-management channel: A recycler, processor, producer responsibility organization, collection system or other operator permitted or recognized under applicable requirements for the relevant waste stream.

8. Implementation Measures

8.1 Reduction of Single-Use Plastics

- Prohibited single-use plastic items shall not be purchased, stocked, distributed, sold or used by University units or vendors where the relevant activity is prohibited by law.
- Departments, cafeterias, canteens, campus shops, vending services and event organizers shall identify avoidable single-use plastic products and establish practical reduction measures.
- Reusable cups, plates, cutlery, food containers and bags shall be preferred for repeated-use settings where hygienic washing, storage and safe use can be ensured.
- Where a disposable item is operationally necessary, the department shall consider whether a lawful, safe and genuinely suitable lower-impact alternative is available.

8.2 Drinking Water and Refill Facilities

- The University should provide and maintain accessible drinking-water refill points at suitable campus locations, subject to water-quality and maintenance requirements.

- Students, employees and visitors should be encouraged to carry reusable water bottles.
- Meetings and University events should avoid routine distribution of single-use plastic water bottles where safe drinking-water refill or reusable-service arrangements are available.
- Exceptions may be made for clinical, emergency, accessibility or other justified needs, subject to applicable requirements.

8.3 Procurement and Supplier Management

- Procurement specifications should prioritize durable reusable products, minimal packaging, recyclable packaging and materials with credible environmental claims.
- Purchase orders and vendor contracts should, where feasible, require compliance with applicable plastic restrictions and cooperation in reducing unnecessary packaging.
- Suppliers should be encouraged to use returnable transport packaging, bulk delivery, take-back arrangements or refill systems where safe and practicable.
- Departments should avoid unnecessary individually wrapped products and promotional items where a suitable alternative exists.
- Environmental claims such as biodegradable, compostable or recyclable must not be accepted without appropriate evidence; alternatives must be compatible with available collection and processing infrastructure.

8.4 Cafeterias, Canteens and Campus Retail

- Food-service operators shall comply with applicable restrictions on prohibited plastic items and avoid unnecessary disposable packaging.
- Dine-in service should prioritize washable and reusable crockery and cutlery where adequate hygiene facilities are available.
- Takeaway services should minimize packaging and offer reusable or suitable recyclable options where operationally feasible and lawful.
- Vendors shall not distribute prohibited plastic carry bags or other prohibited items and shall follow the University’s waste-segregation arrangements.

8.5 Events, Meetings and Communications

- Event organizers should use digital invitations, registrations, programmes and notices instead of plastic-based promotional materials wherever feasible.

- Reusable signage and durable display materials should be preferred to short-lived plastic banners and decorations.
- Meetings and conferences should avoid unnecessary disposable bottles, cups, cutlery and packaging.
- Event plans should identify waste collection points and the unit responsible for post-event segregation and collection.

8.6 Laboratories, Hospitals and Clinical Areas

Plastic items used for infection prevention, sterile procedures, specimen collection, medicines, clinical care, research or laboratory safety shall not be replaced solely to meet a plastic-reduction target if doing so could compromise safety, quality or legal compliance. Relevant departments shall nevertheless minimize avoidable packaging and non-essential plastic use where safe and feasible. Biomedical waste, contaminated plastics, chemical containers, sharps and other regulated waste shall be segregated and managed under the applicable rules and the University's specific procedures; they must not be placed in general recycling streams unless expressly permitted by the applicable procedure.

8.7 Segregation, Collection and Recycling

- Clearly labelled collection bins shall be placed at suitable locations to support segregation of recyclable plastic from general waste and other waste streams.
- Users shall follow campus bin labels and local segregation instructions; contaminated, biomedical, chemical or otherwise regulated plastic waste must follow its designated procedure.
- Facilities or the designated waste-management unit shall coordinate collection and transfer through appropriate lawful channels and maintain relevant records.
- Plastic waste shall not be openly burned, littered, buried on campus or discharged into drains or water bodies.
- Recycling shall be pursued where a suitable collection and processing route exists; the University shall not assume that all plastics or all products labelled compostable are accepted by local facilities.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

- **University Administration / competent authority:** Approve the Policy, allocate resources and provide institutional oversight.

- **Designated Sustainability / Environment, Health and Safety unit:** Coordinate implementation, guidance, awareness, inspections, data collection and annual review.
- **Procurement and Stores:** Apply purchasing preferences, track relevant purchases and communicate requirements to suppliers.
- **Facilities and Waste Management:** Provide and maintain collection points, coordinate segregation and lawful transfer, and maintain waste records.
- **Heads of departments, colleges, laboratories and hospitals:** Implement the Policy within their units, identify practical reduction opportunities and ensure that safety and clinical requirements are respected.
- **Cafeteria operators, vendors, contractors and suppliers:** Comply with applicable restrictions, contractual requirements and campus waste procedures.
- **Event organizers:** Include plastic-minimization measures in event planning and arrange post-event segregation.
- **Faculty, staff, students and visitors:** Avoid unnecessary single-use plastics, use refillable/reusable options where practical, segregate waste correctly and report persistent non-compliance.

10. Training and Awareness

The University shall conduct or promote periodic awareness activities for students, faculty, staff, vendors and contractors. Communication may include induction sessions, workshops, campus campaigns, signage at procurement and waste points, digital communications and sustainability events. Training for procurement, catering and waste-management personnel shall include relevant legal restrictions, segregation instructions and procedures for handling special waste streams.

11. Monitoring, Records and Reporting

The designated coordinating unit shall establish a baseline and review progress at least annually. Data should be collected using consistent definitions and methods. Suggested indicators include:

- Annual quantity or expenditure of selected single-use plastic items purchased, where data are available.
- Quantity or weight of plastic waste generated and collected for recycling, where measurement is feasible.

- Number or percentage of departments and food-service outlets implementing plastic-reduction measures.
- Availability and functionality of drinking-water refill stations.
- Percentage of relevant procurement contracts or vendor agreements containing plastic-minimization requirements.
- Number of awareness or training activities conducted and participation levels.
- Number of non-compliance incidents identified and corrective actions completed.

A phased annual reduction target may be set after the University establishes a reliable baseline, assesses operational feasibility and identifies responsible data owners. Any target (including a percentage target) should be approved by the competent authority rather than treated as an existing institutional commitment.

12. Compliance and Corrective Action

All covered units and service providers are expected to comply with this Policy and applicable law. Suspected non-compliance should be reported to the designated coordinating unit or relevant authority. Corrective action may include removal of prohibited items, supplier engagement, retraining, revised procurement or service arrangements, follow-up inspection and contractual or disciplinary measures in accordance with University rules and due process. Statutory violations shall be handled in accordance with applicable law.

13. Review and Amendment

The policy owner shall review this Policy at least annually, or earlier following changes in applicable law, significant audit finding, operational changes or evidence that current measures are ineffective. Review should consider purchasing data, waste audits, feedback from departments and campus users, supplier performance and the availability of safe alternatives. Revisions shall be submitted to the competent University authority for approval.

14. Related Procedures and Documents

- Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, as amended, and applicable notifications and guidelines.
- University solid-waste segregation and collection procedure.
- Biomedical Waste Management procedure for applicable healthcare and laboratory facilities.
- Procurement and vendor-management procedures.

- Hazardous waste and e-waste management procedures, as applicable.
- Campus sustainability, environmental health and safety, and event-management procedures.

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