VINAYAKA MISSION'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION

(Deemed to be University under section 3 of the UGC Act 1956)



Smoke Free Campus Policy

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SMOKE FREE CAMPUS POLICY

Drafted by	Dy. Director-Research
Verified by	Director I/c, Accreditation & Ranking
Passed by	Vice-Chancellor
Approved by	Executive Council
Effective date	From the Date of Approval
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VINAYAKA MISSION'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS POLICY

1. Preamble

Vinayaka Mission's Research Foundation (Deemed to be University) (VMRF(DU)) is committed to providing a healthy, safe, clean and supportive learning, working and residential environment. Exposure to second-hand smoke and the use of tobacco products can adversely affect health and wellbeing. This Policy establishes a smoke-free campus environment and promotes awareness, prevention, responsible conduct and access to tobacco-cessation support.

The Policy shall be implemented in accordance with applicable Indian laws and regulations, including the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA), as amended or applicable from time to time, and relevant rules. Where legal requirements differ from this Policy, applicable law shall prevail.

2. Short Title and Commencement

1. This policy shall be called **"Smoke-free campus policy of VMRF (DU).**
2. This policy shall come into force from the date of approval of the Executive Council of the University.

3. Purpose

- Protect students, research scholars, faculty, non-teaching staff, patients, visitors, contractors and other campus users from exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Establish and maintain smoke-free University buildings, grounds, hostels and other University-controlled premises.
- Discourage tobacco use and prevent the initiation of smoking or vaping, particularly among young people.
- Promote a clean campus and reduce tobacco-related litter, including cigarette butts and related waste.
- Provide information, awareness and appropriate referral support for individuals who wish to stop using tobacco.
- Ensure that policy implementation is consistent, fair, documented and aligned with applicable law and University procedures.

4. Scope and Applicability

This Policy applies to all students, research scholars, faculty, non-teaching and administrative staff, officers, applicants, visitors, patients and accompanying persons, contractors, vendors, service providers and other persons entering or using University-controlled premises.

The Policy applies to all University campuses and premises under its control, including academic and administrative blocks, laboratories, libraries, healthcare facilities, hostels and residences, canteens, auditoriums, meeting rooms, corridors, staircases, washrooms, sports facilities, gardens, open spaces, parking areas, University-owned or operated vehicles, and temporary structures or event venues. Where the University does not control a location, it shall act within its authority and applicable legal requirements.

5. Policy Statement

VMRF(DU) shall maintain a smoke-free campus. Smoking in all indoor University premises and in all other areas were prohibited by applicable law or University rules. To maintaining a smoke-free campus, VMRF(DU) prohibits smoking throughout University-controlled outdoor areas.

- Use of cigarettes, bidis, cigars, pipes, hookahs or other smoked tobacco products is prohibited throughout University-controlled premises.
- Use of e-cigarettes, vaping devices and other prohibited electronic nicotine delivery systems is not permitted on campus, in accordance with applicable law and University rules.
- Use of chewing tobacco and other smokeless tobacco products on campus is prohibited under this institutional Policy.
- Sale, distribution, advertising, promotion or commercial display of tobacco products on University-controlled premises is prohibited.
- Smoking or tobacco use is prohibited in hostels, residences, staff accommodation under University control, campus events and University vehicles.
- No person may intimidate, harass or discriminate against an individual for raising good-faith concern about a possible violation of this Policy.

6. Objectives

- To protect students, faculty, staff, patients and visitors from exposure to second-hand smoke.

- To establish and maintain smoke-free buildings, grounds, hostels and other University-controlled premises.
- To discourage tobacco consumption and prevent the initiation of smoking and vaping, particularly among young people.
- To reduce tobacco-related litter, including cigarette butts and associated waste.
- To educate the University community about the health risks associated with smoking, tobacco use and vaping.
- To facilitate access to counselling, health information and tobacco-cessation services.
- To promote consistent, fair and documented implementation in accordance with applicable laws and University regulations.
- To foster a safe, healthy and supportive learning, working and residential environment.

7. Definitions

Smoking: Lighting, holding, carrying or using a lighted tobacco product, or inhaling or exhaling smoke from a tobacco product, as understood under applicable law.

Tobacco product: Any product containing tobacco intended for human consumption, including cigarettes, bidis, cigars, chewing tobacco, gutkha, khaini, snuff and other products covered by applicable law.

Electronic smoking device: An e-cigarette, vape or similar device used to aerosolise or deliver a substance for inhalation. These devices are prohibited on campus to the extent required by applicable law and University rules.

Smoke-free area: An area in which smoking is prohibited under this Policy and applicable law.

Tobacco-free campus: A campus where the use, possession for consumption, sale, distribution and promotion of tobacco products are restricted or prohibited as specified in this Policy and applicable law.

8. Signage and Communication

- Display clear and visible “No Smoking” and “No Tobacco Use” notices at campus entrances, buildings, hostels, healthcare facilities, canteens, common areas and other appropriate locations.
- Publish the Policy on the University website or other official communication channels and include it in relevant student and staff handbooks, induction and orientation materials.

- Inform visitors, contractors, vendors and event organisers of the Policy through appropriate notices, entry instructions, contracts or event communications.
- Ensure signage is maintained, legible and placed in locations where it can reasonably inform campus users.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

- University Administration: designate the policy owner and monitoring authority, provide implementation support and ensure that procedures are consistent with University regulations and applicable law.
- Campus/Facility Administration: display and maintain notices, communicate the requirements to occupants and coordinate responses to reported violations.
- Security Personnel: respond to observed or reported violations, provide a respectful reminder, document incidents where required and refer repeated or serious cases to the designated authority.
- Deans, Heads of Departments and Unit Heads: communicate the Policy within their areas and refer concerns through established channels.
- Student Affairs, Hostel Administration and relevant support units: include the Policy in student and resident orientation and apply the relevant conduct procedures.
- Health Centre/Counselling or Student Support Services: provide health information and, where available, confidential counselling or referral to authorised tobacco-cessation services.
- Students, employees and campus users: comply with the Policy, avoid tobacco use on campus, inform visitors of the requirements where appropriate and report concerns through designated channels.
- Contractors, vendors and event organisers: ensure their employees and invitees comply with the Policy while on University premises.

10. Reporting and Response to Violations

a. A person who observes a possible violation may respectfully remind the individual of the smoke-free requirement, where safe and appropriate, or report it to Security, the facility authority or the designated monitoring authority.

b. The receiving authority should assess the report, explain the applicable requirement and request that the prohibited activity stop immediately.

c. Incidents may be documented with the date, location, nature of the incident and action taken, while handling personal information in accordance with University procedures and applicable law.
d. Where a violation is repeated, serious or involves refusal to comply, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate University authority for action under the applicable student, employee, visitor, contractor or service-provider rules.
e. Visitors who refuse to comply may be asked to leave University premises, subject to applicable procedures and safety considerations.
f. Any disciplinary or other penalty must be authorised by applicable law and University regulations. This Policy does not independently create a fine or penalty that is not otherwise authorized.

11. Disciplinary Action

Violations by students and employees may be addressed under the applicable University code of conduct, service rules, hostel rules or other established disciplinary procedures. Responses may include counselling, verbal or written warning, a formal report or disciplinary proceedings, depending on the circumstances and applicable rules. Contractors and vendors may be dealt with under relevant contractual terms. Any action shall follow due process and the University's approved procedures.

12. Tobacco-Cessation Support and Health Awareness

VMRF (DU) supports individuals attempting to quit tobacco use by

- Provide periodic awareness programmes on the health effects of smoking, second-hand smoke, tobacco and vaping.
- Where available, offer or facilitate confidential counselling through the University Health Centre, counselling service or other authorised support service.
- Provide information or referral to authorised tobacco-cessation services and relevant public-health resources when requested.
- Use a supportive, non-stigmatising approach to encourage cessation while consistently enforcing the smoke-free campus requirements.

13. Campus Events, Contractors and Visitors

Organisers of conferences, meetings, cultural events, sports events and other University activities shall communicate and enforce the Policy at the venue. Contracts, work orders or visitor

instructions may include smoke-free requirements. No smoking area shall be designated within University-controlled premises under this Policy.

14. Monitoring and Documentation

The designated monitoring authority shall periodically review implementation and may maintain records of signage, awareness activities, reports received, responses taken and recurring problem locations. Monitoring methods must comply with applicable law and University privacy and security procedures. Any use of CCTV or other surveillance must be lawful, proportionate, authorised and consistent with the University's applicable policies; this Policy itself does not authorize new surveillance.

15. Training and Awareness

The University may use orientation sessions, notices, digital communications, student activities and health-awareness programmes to explain the Policy. Relevant security personnel, hostel staff, event organisers and administrative teams should be briefed on respectful communication, reporting routes and referral procedures.

16. Review and Amendment

This Policy will be reviewed at least once every three years, or earlier if required by changes in applicable law, University regulations, campus needs or implementation experience. The review may consider incident records, feedback, awareness activities and the availability of cessation support. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the competent authority for approval.

17. Approval and Commencement

This Policy shall come into effect on the date of approval by the competent authority of VMRF(DU). It shall be read with applicable Indian law and the University's statutes, codes of conduct, security procedures, hostel rules and other relevant policies. Applicable law and the University's governing instruments shall prevail in the event of inconsistency.

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