

# Sri Lanka

## National Higher Education Equity Policy

### Governance

The Ministry of Higher Education and Cultural Affairs is responsible for defining national policies in higher education. The University Grants Commission allocates resources to the public universities.

### Higher Education Policy Documents

What are the current official documents defining the national higher education strategy / policies?

- Higher Education Law: Universities Act, No. 16 of 1978

### Equity Policy Documents

What broad and specific equity objectives do the policy documents identify?

- One of the goals of the Ministry of Higher Education and Cultural Affairs is to promote “increased opportunities and access to Higher Education”

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents?

- Gender groups
- Minority groups: regional origin

Sri Lanka does not have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups.

Sri Lanka does not have a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education.

Are there specific anti-discrimination provisions?

- University-based policies on gender discrimination:  
<http://eugc.ac.lk/cgee/index.php/university-policy/>
- Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions ACT No 20 of 1998

What specific interventions and/or instruments of equity promotion are included in the official strategy and policy documents (monetary and non-monetary)?

### ***Monetary Policy Instruments***

- Scholarships (Mahapola Scheme - <http://mahapola.lk/>) are managed by the Mahapola Higher Education Scholarship Trust Fund.
- Student loans: the Government administers an interest-free student loan scheme for students enrolled in eligible private higher education institutions.

### ***Non-Monetary Policy Instruments***

- Regional affirmative action programs: allocations by district
- The Open University offers learning opportunities for students in remote regions.  
(<http://www.mohe.gov.lk/index.php/75-the-open-university-of-sri-lanka>)

### **Financial Resources**

What financial resources does the country devote to equity promotion measures?

Not available

### **Quality Assurance**

The quality assurance criteria take equity elements into consideration. The quality assurance framework examines gender equity in its assessments. Listed under the Governance and Management Criteria, it considers whether:

“The University/HEI strives to promote gender equity and equality (GEE) and deter any form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) amongst all categories of staff and students by adopting an appropriate policy and strategy drawn up in line with the UGC prescribed policy and strategy (on GEE and SGBV) and it is spearheaded through a task force/coordinating body with necessary empowerments and resources for effective implementation.”  
(*Manual for Institutional Review*, p. 32)

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The University Grants Council is responsible for monitoring the impact of equity promotion measures

## **Dedicated Equity Promotion Agency**

Sri Lanka does not have an agency dedicated to equity promotion in higher education. However, the University Grants Council's Center for Gender Equity/Equality (<http://eugc.ac.lk/cgee/>) focuses on equity issues pertaining to gender. It supports the work of the University Grants Commission and the Standing Committee on Gender Equity/Equality through: policy-making, monitoring and evaluation of gender equity policies, redress for sexual and gender-based violence in UGC universities, expertise and trainings, etc...

## **Sources**

Ministry of Higher Education and Cultural Affairs (<http://www.mohe.gov.lk/>)

University Grants Commission (<http://www.ugc.ac.lk/>)

Center for Gender Equity/Equality (<http://eugc.ac.lk/cgee/>)

"Objectives of the Center" Center for Gender Equity/Equality ([http://eugc.ac.lk/cgee/index.php/build02\\_objectivies/](http://eugc.ac.lk/cgee/index.php/build02_objectivies/)) (Accessed October 9, 2018)

Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions ACT No 20 of 1998 ([http://eugc.ac.lk/ge\\_eq/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Act-No.-20E001.pdf](http://eugc.ac.lk/ge_eq/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Act-No.-20E001.pdf))

Dundar, Halil, Benoît Millot, Michelle Riboud, Mari Shojo, Harsha Aturupane, Sangeeta Goyal, and Dhushyanth Raju. 2017. Sri Lanka Education Sector Assessment: Achievements, Challenges, and Policy Options. Directions in Development. Washington, DC: World Bank.  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/27042/9781464810527.pdf?sequence=2>

*Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*, University Grants Commission, April 2015  
<http://www.eugc.ac.lk/qaa/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IR-Manual-Printed-Version-7th-May.pdf>