

Chitkara University — Initiatives to Support & Encourage Women in STEM Workforce

Chitkara University runs a range of programs, events and support structures aimed at encouraging women into STEM careers and supporting those already on that path. These include targeted contests and workshops for women in science, mentoring and counselling services, entrepreneurship and skill-development programs for women, participation/support for national programs that spotlight women engineers, and celebration & awareness events (e.g., International Women's Day.

Mentoring & Counselling Cell

Chitkara has an established Mentoring & Counselling Cell that provides academic, career and personal counselling, and pairs students with faculty mentors to support confidence, career navigation and skill development. This is a campus-wide resource used by all students and is frequently referenced in university communications as central to student well-being and professional readiness.

Chitkara University continues its commitment to fostering a supportive educational environment with its Student Mentoring and Counselling Cell, which enhances student well-being, mental health, and personal growth. Recognising the pressures students face during their academic journey, including stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges, the university has established this resource to ensure all students, especially girls, have equal access to educational opportunities and support. This initiative is part of Chitkara University's mission to create a holistic and inclusive educational experience.

The Mentoring and Counselling Cell offer a structured system of guidance and support, helping students unlock their potential in terms of academic, professional, and personal goals. The mentoring component pairs students with experienced mentors who focus on nurturing students' skills, confidence, social values, and ethical perspectives. Through increased contact hours with faculty, students build a supportive rapport with mentors who are prepared to help them navigate the challenges of university life. The system also identifies students who may need additional academic support, such as advanced or specialised tutoring, while helping them explore opportunities for professional development and cultural engagement.

Beyond mentorship, the Counselling Cell provides free, one-on-one sessions with qualified professionals who offer confidential guidance to students experiencing mental health difficulties. These sessions are designed to provide emotional support without imposing financial burdens, ensuring every student can access the resources they need. For students with disabilities, Chitkara University has further prioritised inclusivity by implementing accessibility resources, including wheelchair ramps, elevators, and specially designed facilities, reinforcing its commitment to providing a welcoming campus for all.

Through these comprehensive initiatives, Chitkara University ensures that every student, regardless of background or challenges, is equipped with the resources and support to thrive academically and personally. Dr. Madhu Chitkara, Pro Chancellor of Chitkara University, emphasised, "Our mission is to cultivate a supportive educational environment that nurtures mental health and promotes overall well-being. The Mentoring and Counselling Cell stand as a testament to this commitment."

By prioritising mental health and equal access to educational resources, Chitkara University is not only enhancing the academic experience but also preparing students to contribute to a resilient and inclusive society. Through its Mentoring and Counselling Cell, the university reaffirms its dedication to student well-being, shaping a future-ready, empowered community.

Impact for women in STEM: The cell offers safe, structured mentoring and counselling which is particularly valuable for women facing stereotype threat, career-path uncertainty, or needing workplace-readiness guidance.



2. Programs, events and contests specifically for women

Women in Science / Innovation contests

Chitkara's research & innovation network has organized *Women in Science* innovation contests (for example tied to National Science Day) that give women researchers and students a visible platform to present ideas to external juries, gain recognition, and receive mentoring/support.



Innovation Contests for WOMEN in STEM on National Science Day: WOMEN in SCIENCE under MISSION INNOVATION PUNJAB was organized by Chitkara University Research & Innovation Networking association with Punjab State Council for Science & Technology on 28th Feb 2020. Eighteen selected Women Contestants presented their ideas in final round in front of external jury members. Jury members from reputed institute Prof. Sunita Kapila (Former Chairperson of Department of Botany, Panjab University, Chandigarh), Sonia Dosanjh (Joint Director, C-DAC, Mohali) and Dr. Vijay Luxmi (Associate Professor, Thapar University, Patiala) appreciated the innovative ideas of all the contestants.

Magnetically separable nanomaterial and rice husk-based water purification lead by Dr. Meenakshi Dhiman & team got 1st position and was awarded a cash prize of INR 5000. Dr.

Shivani Malhotra & team secured second position with INR 3000 for her innovative idea on SHE- Suvidha and Ms. Himanshi Babbar & her team got a cash prize of INR 2000 for an idea on Emergency in Transit. Earlier convener Prof. Jyotsna Kaushal and Co convener Dr Shalli briefed the achievements of our Indian Women scientists, engineers, Innovators & entrepreneur. Dr Jyotsna thanked govt. bodies PSCST, NCSTC, DST & GOVT OF INDIA for catalysing & supporting this event. She also thanks to Chitkara university management, Dr Archana Mantri Pro VC (CURIN), Dr SN Panda (Director Research), Dr Sachin Ahuja (Director Patent cell), Dr Pankaj (Dean Ph.D program) and all the CURIN members for their support. Earlier in the morning, event was inaugurated with tree plantation.

Women Entrepreneurship & W-EDP

Chitkara runs Women Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (W-EDP) through its CIIF (Centre for Innovation & Incubation/Industry Interface), aimed at creating entrepreneurial mindset and helping prospective/existing women entrepreneurs from science & technology backgrounds to build enterprises.

Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (W-EDP) is designed to inculcate the required skills and competencies of business among the prospective/existing women entrepreneurs belonging to science & technology academic background. It aims to develop entrepreneurial mindset among the female population and endeavours to motivate and guide them to set up their own enterprises. It will impart training to science & technology graduates and diploma holders in the essentials of conceiving, planning, initiating and launching an economic activity or an enterprise successfully.

W-EDP aims to empower budding and existing women entrepreneurs who want to start, run and grow their business and to create conducive conditions for inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies. It does so by addressing gendered imbalances in enterprise development in order to scale women entrepreneurs' contributions to growth and sustainable development and to enable their meaningful participation in entrepreneurship ecosystem. WEDP provide inputs on process and practice of entrepreneurship development, communication and inter-personal skills, creativity, problem solving, achievement motivation, resources available and all aspects of entrepreneurship.

Unlock the force within you with WEDP, a transformative program designed exclusively for women forging their path in entrepreneurship. Join a community of trailblazers, equipped with skills and insights to conquer the entrepreneurial landscape.

Programme Objectives

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Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (WEDP) aims at training the science & technology graduates and diploma holders in the essentials of conceiving, planning, initiating and launching an economic activity or an enterprise successfully.

Entrepreneurial Mastery Curriculum: Crafting Success from Concept to Reality

- **Ideation Brilliance:** Unleash your creativity with cutting-edge idea generation techniques, setting the stage for groundbreaking entrepreneurial concepts.
- **Idea Incubation Lab:** Identify and nurture your business ideas through a hands-on process that transforms ideas into viable and sustainable ventures.
- **Market Insight Immersion:** Dive deep into market research and idea validation, gaining the skills to navigate and thrive in competitive business landscapes.
- **Business Model Innovation:** Design robust and forward-thinking business models that form the backbone of successful entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Government Support Demystified:** Explore and leverage government schemes tailored for women entrepreneurs, unlocking hidden opportunities for growth.
- **Motivation for Success:** Harness the power of achievement motivation to propel your entrepreneurial journey forward, overcoming challenges with resilience.
- **Plan for Triumph:** Develop a comprehensive business plan, a strategic roadmap that transforms your ideas into tangible and successful ventures.
- **Legal Foundations & Fiscal Wisdom:** Navigate legal formalities and taxation with confidence, ensuring your business operates seamlessly within regulatory frameworks.

Program Excellence Highlights:

- **Guidance by Industry Pioneers:** Learn from the expertise of local institutions, seasoned entrepreneurs, and mentors dedicated to empowering women in business.
- **Immersive Learning Experience:** Engage in a 3-week online program featuring interactive sessions, workshops, and collaborative group projects for practical learning.
- **Real-world Application Mastery:** Translate theory into practice by immersing yourself in workshops and projects that mirror real entrepreneurial challenges.
- **Networking beyond Boundaries:** Connect with mentors, investors, and industry experts, expanding your entrepreneurial network and opening doors to collaboration.
- **Certification of Distinction:** Earn a valuable certificate of completion, validating your newfound entrepreneurial skills and enhancing your profile.

- **Leadership & Team Building Excellence:** Acquire leadership insights and team-building skills critical for steering your venture and fostering a collaborative work environment.
- **Financial Acumen Enhancement:** Elevate your financial management skills for effective budgeting, funding strategies, and risk mitigation, ensuring fiscal brilliance in your entrepreneurial journey.

Events with industry partners / SWE & Google-backed pathways

The university hosts skill & innovation forums (e.g., in collaboration with SWE India) and supports students' participation in national programs such as Talent Sprint's Women Engineers program (a Google-supported initiative), where Chitkara students have been selected as scholars. Such links help women access advanced training, scholarships and industry networks.

According to the famous saying of Mrs. Kirthiga Reddy, Head, Facebook India "I strongly believe that the first step and the most important tool towards women empowerment is education. The right education will ensure that women are more competent and confident in taking up bigger challenges and raising the bar in any field". To promote WOMEN IN ENGINEERING, ACM Student Chapter, Department of Computer Science and Engineering organized a 24-hour National Level Hackathon in collaboration with ACM-W and Oracle Academy on 2nd -3rd Oct 2017 for Girl Students.

3rd of October marked the end of the Hackathon. This journey of the Hackathon started with the participation of 308 enthusiastic and tech-savvy teams from all over India with the theme of digital India. A team of 52 highly professional members from ACM India, Chitkara University, and Oracle Academy was formed to review the ideas and select the best 20 teams out of it. The selected 20 teams were then promoted to the next round which was held on 9th September 2017. After in-depth discussions with all the 20 teams, 10 teams were filtered were hence promoted to the final round. The top 10 teams and one wild card entry accompanied by their respective mentors were invited to Chitkara University on 2nd October 2017 and were given 24 hours to successfully run their application and showcase their idea to the judging panel. Hon'bleDr. Madhu Chitkara, Vice-Chancellor of Chitkara University also addressed the students and gave prizes to the top three winners. Top three teams got 24000/, 15000/ and 12000/ respectively as a prize money and were given Chitkara University goodies.



Awareness & celebration events

Chitkara organizes International Women's Day events, Women's Equality Day sessions and related forums that highlight women's achievements, create discussion spaces, and strengthen campus support networks.

Chitkara University celebrated International Women's Day with great fervour and enthusiasm, adopting the theme 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress' alongside the campaign theme 'Inspire Inclusion.' The event served as a platform for thought-provoking discussions and reflections on gender equality, empowerment, and inclusivity.

Distinguished guests graced the panel, including esteemed personalities such as IAS Rakhee Gupta Bhandari, Principal Secretary of the Government of Punjab; Savita Bhatti, renowned actor and writer; Pradeep Pushpa ji, Mahamandaleshwar of Kinnar Akhara, Rajasthan; Shipra Bansal, Chairperson of Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights; and Dr. Niyati Chitkara, Director of Chitkara International School, Chandigarh & Panchkula; Dr. Madhu Chitkara, Pro-Chancellor of Chitkara University; and Dr. Archana Mantri, Vice-Chancellor of Chitkara University, Punjab.

This insightful occasion provided a platform for engaging dialogues guided by esteemed panellists, who shared profound insights drawn from their life journeys and delivered valuable messages on the importance of gender equality, empowerment, and inclusivity.

The event underscored the significance of collaborative efforts between men and women in shaping a more equitable and inclusive society. By championing gender equality and fostering

an environment of mutual respect and understanding, we can pave the way for a more harmonious and prosperous future for all.

As Chitkara University continues its commitment to promoting gender equality and empowerment, events like the International Women's Day celebration serve as poignant reminders of the progress the university has made and the work that lies ahead. Through ongoing initiatives, mentorship programs, and educational endeavours, Chitkara University remains steadfast in its dedication to fostering an environment where women are empowered to excel in all facets of life. By embracing diversity and championing inclusivity, the university endeavours to create a brighter, more equitable future for all members of its community and beyond.



3. Training, counselling, and career support

Sessions of Guru Dakshta Programs

Guru Dakshta I (Session 4): 20 Jan 2024

Topic: Higher Education and its Ecosystem

Resource Persons. Dr. Sangeeta Pant, Dean, Department of Education



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Guru Dakshta I (Session-6) Program: 30 Mar 2024

Topic: Personal Emotional Development and Counselling

Resource Persons. Dr. Komal Chawla, Dean, Chitkara School of Psychology and Counselling





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Guru Dakshta I (Session 7): 06 Apr 2024

Topic: Technology for Teaching and Assessment of I-Generation
Resource Person: Dr. Pawan Kumar, Director IT





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Guru Dakshta I (Session 8): 20 Apr 2024

Topic: Strategic Planning and Management

Resource Person: Dr. Sandhir Sharma, Pro Vice-Chancellor, CBS





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Guru Dakshta (Session 10): 04 May 2024

Topic: Constitution Values, Human Rights and Fundamental Duties
Resource Person: Dr. Ajay Ranga, Dean, Chitkara Law School



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Guru Dakshta II (Session 1): 18 May 2024

Topic: Curriculum Design, Outcome Based Learning and CBCS
Resource Person: Dr. Vijay Jadon, Dean CUIET (Applied Engineering)





Guru Dakshta II (Session-2):29 Jun 2024

Topic: a) Role of Higher Education in the 21st Century and NEP 2020

b) Introduction to Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

Resource Person: Dr. Manish Verma, Pro VC, Academic Affairs and Dr. Sovia Raj Singh, Director, PDC





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Guru Dakshta II (Session-3): 24 Aug 2024

Topic: Use of ICT and Alternate Technologies in Education and Research
Resource Person: Pawan Kumar Director, TPG



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Guru Dakshta II (Session-4): 07 Sep 2024

Topic: Constitution Values, Human Rights and Fundamental Duties
Resource Person: Dr. Ajay Ranga, Dean, Chitkara Law School





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Guru Dakshta II & III (Session 5 and1) :19 Oct 2024

Topic: a) Instructional Planning Delivery

b) Assessment System in the University

Resource Persons: Dr. Sangeeta Pant, Dean, Department of Education and Dr Rajeev Kamal Sharma, Dean, Examinations



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Guru Dakshta II & III (Session 6 and 2): 23 Nov 2024

Topic: Environmental Consciousness, sustainability and SDGs

Resource Person: Dr. Rina Angel, VP, Infrastructure Enhancement





Guru Dakshta II & III (Sessions 7 and 3) :21 Dec 2024 Topic: Personal Emotional Development and Counselling

Resource Persons: Dr. Monika Shrivastava, Dean CSPC, Dr. Meenu Sharma and Dr. Shweta Narayan





Guru Dakshta II & III (Session 8 and 4) : 18 Jan 2025

Topic: Need for and Importance of Skill Development and Skill Based Education in India **Resource Persons:** Dr. Adarsh Aggarwal, VP, CIIF and Mr. Piyush Garg, VP, CEED



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Guru Dakshta II & III (Session 9 and 5): 01 Feb 2025

Topic: a) Strengthening Research and Its Contribution

b) Assessment of Research Potential, Preparing Proposal, Quality Parameters of Research and Academic Integrity

Resource Persons. Dr. Amit Mittal, Pro VC, Research Programs and staff of CRIO



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