KPR Foundation for Innovation and Social Empowerment (KPRISE)

STUDENT STARTUP POLICY

In Compliance with AICTE Guidelines &
JNTU Hyderabad (JNTUH) Regulations

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1. Introduction

The KPR Foundation for Innovation and Social Empowerment (KPRISE) is a Section 8 non-profit organization established under the Companies Act, 2013, and supported by T-HUB and WE HUB. KPRISE is dedicated to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and social transformation by empowering students and innovators to build sustainable, inclusive, and technology-driven solutions.

This Student Startup Policy (SSP) provides a comprehensive framework for students enrolled in JNTUH-affiliated institutions to pursue entrepreneurial ventures alongside their academic journey. The policy is aligned with the National Innovation and Startup Policy (NISP) 2019, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) guidelines on student entrepreneurship, and JNTUH regulations governing student academic activities.

This policy document is subject to periodic review. KPRISE Management reserves the right to make amendments in accordance with any revised guidelines issued by AICTE or JNTUH. All student entrepreneurs are expected to stay updated with the latest version of this policy.

2. Vision, Mission, and Objectives

2.1. Vision

To cultivate a dynamic entrepreneurial culture among students of JNTUH-affiliated institutions, empowering them to transform innovative ideas into sustainable ventures that address societal needs and contribute to national development, in alignment with AICTE's National Innovation Ecosystem objectives.

2.2. Mission

- To encourage student-led innovation through structured academic support and entrepreneurial flexibility, as mandated by AICTE and JNTUH.
- To provide access to high-quality mentorship, infrastructure, and funding opportunities within an AICTE-recognized incubation framework.
- To integrate entrepreneurial learning into the academic curriculum through credit-based mechanisms approved by JNTUH.
- To facilitate industry linkages and investor connects for student startups, creating pathways to national startup ecosystems.

2.3. Objectives

- Foster an innovation-driven mindset among the student community of JNTUH-affiliated institutions.
- Provide clear, transparent, and enforceable guidelines for academic relaxations and credit transfers in compliance with JNTUH norms.
- Establish robust protocols for IP ownership, equity sharing, and technology licensing.
- Facilitate access to government schemes, grants, and institutional funding for student startups.
- Create a measurable and accountable system of monitoring and evaluation for incubated student ventures.

3. Regulatory Framework

This policy is governed by and aligned with the following national and institutional regulatory frameworks:

Regulatory Authority / Document	Key Provision Adopted
AICTE – Student Entrepreneur Guidelines	Attendance relaxation up to 20%; startup substitution for internships/projects; credit equivalence
National Innovation & Startup Policy (NISP) 2019	Student IP rights; pre-incubation support; institutional equity limits (2%–9.5%); semester break provisions
JNTUH Academic Regulations	Credit transfer, semester break, re-admission norms, internship substitution criteria
Companies Act, 2013	Registration, governance, and compliance requirements for student startups
Startup India (DPIIT)	Recognition, tax benefits, fast-track mechanisms, government grants eligibility
DST – NIDHI Programme	Pre-incubation seed funding (PRAYAS), Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR)

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them:

Student Entrepreneur	A currently enrolled student (UG/PG/PhD) or recent alumni (within 3 years of graduation) from a JNTUH-affiliated institution who is founding or co-founding a startup.
Student Startup	A business entity (sole proprietorship, partnership, LLP, or private limited company) founded or co-founded by a student entrepreneur, with a validated innovative idea or MVP.
Pre-Incubation	The initial support stage (3–18 months) focused on idea validation, feasibility assessment, and Proof of Concept (PoC) development, as per KPRISE's Incubation Operating Manual.
Incubation/Acceleration	The structured support stage (up to 18 months) for startups with validated PoC or MVP, focusing on product development, market entry, and scaling.
AICTE	All India Council for Technical Education – the statutory body regulating technical education in India.
JNTUH	Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Hyderabad – the affiliating university governing the academic regulations applicable to students.
IP (Intellectual Property)	Any patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, or other form of intellectual output generated by a student during their startup journey.
Credit Transfer	The process by which academic credits are awarded to a student for entrepreneurial activities as a substitute for academic coursework, subject to JNTUH norms.

5. Eligibility Criteria

5.1. Eligible Applicants

The following categories of students and alumni are eligible to apply for student startup support at KPRISE:

- Currently enrolled undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG), or doctoral (PhD) students of JNTUH-affiliated institutions.
- Recent alumni of JNTUH-affiliated institutions who have graduated within the last 3 years.
- Teams or co-founders, where at least one founder must be a current student or eligible alumni.
- Researchers and innovators associated with JNTUH-affiliated institutions who intend to commercialize their intellectual property.

5.2. Eligibility Conditions

All applicants must satisfy the following conditions:

- Possession of an innovative idea or early-stage venture with potential for social or economic impact.
- Endorsement or acknowledgment from a designated Faculty Mentor from the affiliated institution (mandatory for current students).
- Agreement to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in this policy and the KPRISE Incubation Operating Manual.
- Commitment to maintaining academic obligations, except where specific relaxations are granted under Section 6.
- Compliance with all applicable laws, institutional codes of conduct, and JNTUH academic regulations.

6. Academic Flexibility and Support

KPRISE recognizes the unique challenges faced by student entrepreneurs in balancing academic and entrepreneurial commitments. The following academic relaxations are provided in strict alignment with AICTE guidelines and JNTUH academic regulations:

6.1. Attendance Relaxation

In line with AICTE's directive to affiliated institutions, student entrepreneurs who are actively incubated at KPRISE shall be eligible for an attendance relaxation of up to 20% over and above the standard minimum attendance requirement stipulated by JNTUH (currently 75%).

Parameter	Provision
Standard Minimum Attendance (JNTUH)	75% of total classes
Relaxation Permitted (AICTE / KPRISE)	Up to 20% (effective minimum: 55%)
Approval Authority	Academic Department Head + KPRISE Management
Documentation Required	KPRISE Incubation Certificate, Activity Log, Faculty Mentor Endorsement
Review Frequency	Semester-wise

Note: This relaxation is subject to the student maintaining satisfactory academic performance and is renewable each semester upon submission of a progress report to both KPRISE and the academic department.

6.2. Academic Credit and Project Substitution

6.2.1. Project and Internship Substitution

Student entrepreneurs may substitute their startup venture in lieu of the following, subject to approval by a Joint Committee comprising KPRISE and institutional faculty, and subject to JNTUH guidelines:

- Mini Projects (as applicable to UG/PG programs)
- Major Projects / Final Year Projects
- Mandatory Industrial Internships (where the startup activity is deemed equivalent)

The startup activity must be demonstrably relevant to the student's field of study, and a formal evaluation by the JNTUH-approved committee must confirm the equivalence.

6.2.2. Credit Transfer for Entrepreneurial Activities

Students engaged in entrepreneurial activities may earn academic credits as per the following framework, evaluated by a joint committee of KPRISE management and the institution's academic council:

Activity	Indicative Credits	Approval Required
Internship / Minor Project (startup)	2–4 Credits	JNTUH COE + Dept. + KPRISE
Major Project (startup as capstone)	4–8 Credits	JNTUH COE + Dept. + KPRISE
IP Filing / Patent Registration	1–2 Credits	Institution's Innovation Cell
Startup Registration (DPIIT Recognized)	1 Credit	Institution's Innovation Cell
Participation in Hackathon / National Competition (Winner)	1 Credit	Faculty Mentor Endorsement

6.3. Semester / Year Break

Student entrepreneurs may be permitted to take a semester break or an academic year break (maximum of 2 consecutive semesters, totaling 1 academic year) to work full-time on their startup venture, subject to:

- A formal application endorsed by the Faculty Mentor and approved by the Principal/Director of the institution and the JNTUH Controller of Examinations (COE).
- Submission of a formal business plan and a readmission roadmap to KPRISE management prior to availing the break.
- The student retaining all previously earned academic credits and not losing seniority or academic standing upon readmission.
- The total program duration not exceeding the maximum permissible period as defined by JNTUH regulations (typically 2x the normal program duration).
- The student maintaining active incubation status at KPRISE throughout the break period.

6.4. Examination and Evaluation Provisions

Students availing academic relaxations under this policy shall be entitled to appear in regular university examinations as per JNTUH norms, provided they satisfy the relaxed attendance criteria. No special examinations shall be conducted solely for student entrepreneurs. However, the institution may, subject to JNTUH approval, provide supplementary internal assessment opportunities.

7. Infrastructure and Resource Access

Student startups incubated at KPRISE gain access to world-class facilities as outlined in the KPRISE Incubation Operating Manual. The following table summarizes the resources available:

Facility Type	Description
Co-working Space	Dedicated desks and open co-working areas with high-speed internet, printing, and basic office amenities during the incubation period.
Prototyping / Fab Labs	Access to fabrication labs, 3D printing, electronics workbenches, and specialized technical equipment as available.
Meeting & Conference Rooms	Fully equipped conference rooms and boardrooms for client meetings, investor presentations, and team discussions.
Official Registered Address	Permission to use KPRISE's registered address for company incorporation, DPIIT registration, and official correspondence.
Technical & Digital Infrastructure	Access to cloud computing credits, software licenses, and domain hosting support (subject to availability and partner tie-ups).
Library and Knowledge Resources	Access to curated startup literature, case studies, research databases, and e-learning resources.

Access to all facilities is subject to KPRISE's prevailing infrastructure allocation policies, which may be revised periodically. Usage is restricted to activities related to the incubated startup and must not violate institutional or legal norms.

8. Intellectual Property (IP) and Equity

8.1. IP Ownership Framework

The following framework, aligned with NISP 2019 and AICTE guidelines, governs intellectual property generated during the student startup journey:

IP Category	Conditions	Ownership
Student-Owned IP	Developed without significant use of institutional funds or KPRISE facilities	100% owned by the student(s)
Joint IP	Developed using substantial institutional resources, KPRISE facilities, or JNTUH-affiliated lab infrastructure	Jointly owned by student(s) and KPRISE/Institution in mutually agreed proportion
Institutional IP	Developed as part of funded research projects under JNTUH or government grants with institutional PI oversight	Owned by the institution; licensed to student startup on favorable terms

8.2. IP Licensing

KPRISE shall facilitate the licensing of institutional or jointly owned IP to student startups on easy and favorable terms, which may include nominal royalties or equity transfer, as agreed between the parties. Licensing agreements must be documented formally and comply with all relevant laws.

8.3. Equity Participation by KPRISE

In exchange for comprehensive incubation services including infrastructure, mentorship, and resource access, KPRISE may take a nominal equity stake in student startups. The equity range is stipulated as follows, in conformity with NISP 2019:

- Minimum Equity: 2% of the total founder equity
- Maximum Equity: 9.5% of the total founder equity
- Equity is non-dilutable during the incubation period without written consent of KPRISE.
- The equity terms shall be documented in the formal Incubation Agreement executed between KPRISE and the student startup.

9. Application and Selection Process

9.1. Stages of Application

The application process for student startup incubation at KPRISE is structured in two stages, corresponding to the pre-incubation and incubation/acceleration programs outlined in the KPRISE Incubation Operating Manual:

Stage 1: Pre-Incubation (Idea / PoC Stage)

- Submission of a Pre-Incubation Application Form detailing: problem statement, proposed solution, technical and commercial feasibility assessment, and founding team details.
- Applications are screened on a rolling basis by the KPRISE Management Team.
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited for a presentation before the Selection Committee.
- Duration of pre-incubation: 3 to 18 months, subject to monthly performance reviews.

Stage 2: Incubation / Acceleration (MVP / Growth Stage)

- Submission of a full Incubation Application Form including: business plan, pitch deck, team bios, IP details, and any prior recognition or funding.
- Applications reviewed semi-annually or on a need basis by the KPRISE Selection Committee.
- Shortlisted applicants are invited for a detailed presentation and review.
- Duration of incubation/acceleration: 3 to 18 months, extendable subject to performance. Total support (pre-incubation + incubation) shall not ordinarily exceed 24 months.

9.2. Selection Criteria

Applications shall be evaluated on the following parameters:

Criterion	Description	Weightage
Innovation	Novelty and uniqueness of the proposed solution; originality of approach	**25%**
Feasibility	Technical and commercial viability; clarity of problem-solution fit	**20%**
Team	Commitment, complementary skills, and relevant domain knowledge of founders	**20%**
Impact	Potential for scalability and measurable societal/economic benefit	**20%**
JNTUH / AICTE Alignment	Relevance to academic program; faculty mentor support; regulatory compliance readiness	**15%**

10. Funding and Financial Support

KPRISE assists student startups in securing financial resources through a structured multi-channel approach:

10.1. Government Grants and Schemes

- Startup India (DPIIT Recognition): Facilitation of DPIIT recognition, enabling access to tax benefits, self-certification, and fast-track IP applications.
- DST-NIDHI PRAYAS: Guidance on applying for pre-incubation seed funding under the DST National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) programme.
- MEITY Startup Hub: Support for technology startups in applying for MEITY-funded programs and grants.
- State Government Schemes (T-Hub / T-Works / WE HUB): Facilitation of applications to Telangana state government schemes through KPRISE's T-HUB and WE HUB affiliations.
- AICTE Research & Innovation Grants: Support in applying for AICTE-sponsored innovation and startup grants for AICTE-affiliated institution students.

10.2. Internal Seed Fund

KPRISE shall maintain an internal Innovation Seed Fund, with a minimum of 1% of the annual institutional budget allocated to Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) activities, as recommended by NISP 2019. Disbursement criteria and amounts shall be determined by the KPRISE Investment Committee on a case-by-case basis.

10.3. Investor Connect

- Regular Pitch Days and Demo Days with invited angel investors, venture capitalists, and family offices.
- Curated introductions to relevant investors through KPRISE's T-HUB and WE HUB network.
- Preparation workshops for due diligence readiness and term sheet negotiations.

11. Mentorship and Training

11.1. Faculty Mentor

Each student startup shall be assigned a designated Faculty Mentor from the affiliated JNTUH institution. The Faculty Mentor shall:

- Serve as the primary academic liaison between the student, the institution, and KPRISE.
- Endorse applications for attendance relaxation, credit transfer, and semester break.
- Attend bi-monthly review meetings at KPRISE and provide academic guidance.
- Submit a semester-end evaluation report to both the institution and KPRISE.

11.2. Industry / Expert Mentors

- Each student startup shall be assigned at least one industry mentor from KPRISE's mentor network.
- Mentors will provide domain-specific guidance on product development, business strategy, market entry, and fundraising.
- Mentor assignments are reviewed quarterly and may be changed based on the evolving needs of the startup.

11.3. Structured Training Programs

KPRISE shall organize a structured calendar of workshops, bootcamps, and training sessions covering, but not limited to:

- Business Model Design and Lean Canvas Methodology
- Intellectual Property (IP) Filing and Protection Strategies
- Legal Compliance: Company Registration, GST, Labour Laws
- Financial Modelling, Unit Economics, and Fundraising Readiness
- Product Development: Agile, MVP, and Go-to-Market Strategy
- Investor Pitch Preparation and Communication Skills
- Sustainability and Social Impact Measurement Frameworks

11.4. Experiential Learning

- Participation in national and international hackathons, innovation challenges, and startup competitions.
- Startup immersion programs, international exchange opportunities, and industry visits.
- Peer learning cohorts and cross-functional collaboration with other incubated startups.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Periodic Assessment

12.1. Performance Review Schedule

All student startups incubated at KPRISE shall be subject to a structured and transparent performance review schedule, as follows:

Stage	Review Frequency	Key Focus Areas
Pre-Incubation	Monthly	Idea validation, team building, PoC progress, regulatory readiness
Incubation / Acceleration	Bi-Monthly	Product development, customer acquisition, revenue, fundraising, team growth
Academic Review (JNTUH)	Semester-wise	Attendance compliance, credit transfer status, faculty mentor endorsement

12.2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Startups shall be evaluated against pre-defined milestones aligned with the following KPIs:

- Product Development Milestones (PoC, MVP, Beta, Launch)
- Customer Acquisition and Revenue Generation Targets
- Funding Milestones (Grants, Seed, Pre-Series A)
- IP Filings and Regulatory Registrations
- Team Growth and Organizational Development
- Academic Performance and Compliance (for student founders)
- Social Impact Metrics (where applicable)

12.3. Information Submission Requirements

In accordance with the KPRISE Incubation Operating Manual, all student startups must submit the following periodic reports to KPRISE:

- Monthly Progress Report (for pre-incubatees)
- Quarterly Business Review (for incubatees)

- Semester-end Academic Compliance Report (endorsed by Faculty Mentor)
- Annual Audited Accounts (once the startup is registered as a legal entity)

13. Exit (Graduation) Policy

A student startup shall formally graduate from KPRISE incubation upon fulfillment of one or more of the following conditions:

13.1. Successful Graduation Criteria

- Completion of the maximum permissible incubation period (typically 24 months, inclusive of pre-incubation).
- Raising significant external investment funding (threshold: greater than INR 20 Lakhs from external investors).
- Achieving sustainable and recurring monthly revenue demonstrating market traction.
- Formal transition to a recognized external accelerator, incubator, or corporate partnership program.
- Successful acquisition by or strategic merger with another entity.

13.2. Voluntary and Mandatory Exit

- A startup may voluntarily exit the incubation program at any time by providing a 30-day written notice to KPRISE.
- KPRISE reserves the right to mandate the exit of a startup that fails to meet performance benchmarks for two consecutive review cycles, violates institutional norms, or ceases operations.
- Upon exit, the startup must settle all outstanding dues to KPRISE, return access credentials and facility keys, and fulfill all obligations under the Incubation Agreement.

13.3. Post-Graduation Support

Graduated startups may continue to benefit from KPRISE's alumni network, co-investment introductions, and access to select workshops on an invitation basis, at the discretion of KPRISE Management.

14. Conflict of Interest

All student entrepreneurs, faculty mentors, and KPRISE staff involved in the incubation process are required to disclose any potential conflict of interest that may arise during the selection, mentoring, or evaluation process. The following guidelines apply:

- Any Selection Committee member with a personal, financial, or professional interest in an applicant startup must recuse themselves from the evaluation of that application.
- Faculty Mentors must not hold a financial stake in the student startup they are mentoring, beyond what is disclosed and approved by KPRISE Management and the institution.
- All disclosures must be made in writing to the KPRISE Chief Executive / Management Team at the earliest opportunity.
- KPRISE Management reserves the right to investigate any reported conflict of interest and take appropriate remedial action, including disqualification of the concerned application.

15. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

All student startups incubated at KPRISE must comply with the following legal and regulatory requirements:

Regulation / Act	Compliance Requirement
Companies Act, 2013	Formal registration as Pvt. Ltd., LLP, or other entity; filing of annual returns and maintaining statutory records.
GST Act	Registration under GST (if annual turnover exceeds threshold); timely filing of GST returns.
Income Tax Act, 1961	PAN registration; filing of income tax returns; compliance with TDS provisions.
DPIIT Startup India	Application for Startup India recognition to avail tax incentives and benefits under Section 80-IAC.
JNTUH Academic Regulations	Compliance with all academic norms, examination requirements, and the formal Incubation Agreement copy to be shared with the institution.
AICTE Norms	Adherence to AICTE's National Innovation and Startup Policy 2019 at all times.
Institutional Code of Conduct	Strict adherence to the code of conduct and ethical guidelines of KPRISE and the affiliated JNTUH institution.
Intellectual Property Laws	Compliance with the Patents Act, 1970; Copyright Act, 1957; Trade Marks Act, 1999 as applicable.

16. Amendments to this Policy

This Student Startup Policy shall be reviewed and updated at minimum annually, or as and when significant revisions are made to AICTE guidelines, JNTUH academic regulations, or national policies governing student entrepreneurship. The following process shall govern amendments:

- Proposed amendments shall be placed before the KPRISE Governing Board / Management Committee for review and approval.
- All incubated student startups and affiliated institutions shall be notified of approved amendments with a minimum of 30 days' advance notice before the amendments come into effect.
- An updated version of the policy document shall be published on the KPRISE website and made available to all incubatees.
- Amendments shall be documented with a revision number and effective date, and archived for compliance and audit purposes.

17. References

- National Innovation and Startup Policy (NISP) 2019 for Students and Faculty, Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India.
- AICTE Guidelines on Attendance Relaxation for Student Entrepreneurs (Ref: AICTE Circular, 2019).
- JNTUH Academic Regulations (UG/PG) – Current Edition.
- Companies Act, 2013, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), Government of India.
- Startup India Action Plan, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India.

- DST-NIDHI Programme Guidelines, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- KPRISE Incubation Operating Manual, Revision 01, November 2025.
- T-Hub and WE HUB Program Guidelines, Government of Telangana.

End of Document

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