

1.3.3 DIRECT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR LOW INCOME STUDENTS

Centurion University provides comprehensive support services specifically designed to enable students from low-income families to successfully complete their university education. These services address the fundamental barriers of food and security, lack of housing and transportation, and access to legal aid that disproportionately affect economically disadvantaged students and contribute to dropout rates. Centurion University's multi-dimensional support framework combines direct service provision with financial assistance, ensuring that no student is forced to abandon their education due to economic hardship.

1. FOOD SECURITY: Subsidized Meal Programs

Centurion University operates subsidized dining facilities across all campus locations, recognizing that food insecurity is a critical barrier to academic success for low-income students.

Key Features:

- Subsidized campus mess facilities provide three meals daily at significantly reduced rates
- Targeted subsidies for SC/ST/OBC students from economically weaker sections
- Special meal plans for hostel residents from low-income families, with further discounts
- Nutritionally balanced meals ensure students maintain health and academic performance
- Flexible meal payment options allow students to pay in installments or access meals on credit during financial emergencies

Impact: By reducing daily living costs by approximately ₹3,000-₹5,000 per month, subsidized food services directly address poverty-related nutritional deficits and enable students to focus on academics rather than basic survival needs.

2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Hostel Accommodation

Centurion University provides on-campus hostel facilities with differentiated pricing structures to ensure affordable housing for students from the bottom income quintile.

Housing Support Framework:

a) Subsidized Hostel Fees:

- Standard hostel accommodation is provided at reduced rates for SC/ST/OBC students
- Additional fee waivers for students from families earning below ₹1,00,000 annually
- Hostel fees are integrated into scholarship disbursements, with several schemes (e.g., PMS, KVNY) covering both tuition and accommodation costs
- Example from AY 2024-25: B.Sc. Agriculture and B.Tech students received scholarships ranging from ₹70,000-₹110,000, explicitly covering both educational and living expenses including hostel charges

b) Accommodation Features:

- Safe, gender-segregated hostel blocks with 24/7 security
- Basic furnishing including beds, study tables, storage, and electricity
- Common areas for group study and peer learning

- Wi-Fi connectivity enabling digital learning access
- Proximity to academic facilities reducing transportation needs

c) Flexible Payment Arrangements:

- Deferred payment plans allow students to pay hostel fees in two installments
- Emergency accommodation support during financial crises
- COVID-19 precedent: During the pandemic, accommodation fees were deferred for an entire academic year to prevent student dropouts

Impact: Affordable on-campus housing eliminates external rental costs (typically ₹3,000-₹8,000/month in urban areas), reduces safety concerns for students from rural/remote areas, and creates an immersive learning environment supporting academic engagement.

3. TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT

Centurion University addresses transportation barriers through:

a) Subsidized Campus Transportation:

- University-operated bus services connecting hostels, academic buildings, and local transport hubs at nominal charge
- Concessional rates for low-income students using campus shuttle services
- Free transportation for field visits, industrial tours, and academic excursions for scholarship recipients

b) Location-Based Access:

- Strategic campus placement in district headquarters (Paralakhemundi, Bolangir, Koraput, Rayagada, Balasore) reduces travel distances for local students
- On-campus residential model minimizes daily commuting needs for 70%+ students
- Proximity to railway stations and bus terminals at most campuses facilitates affordable travel for students visiting their families.

c) Travel Allowances:

- Some scholarship schemes (particularly PMS for ST/SC students) include travel allowance components covering home-to-campus journeys
- Emergency travel grants are available for students facing family crises

Impact: Transportation support reduces monthly commuting costs (typically ₹1,500-₹3,000) while ensuring regular class attendance and participation in co-curricular activities critical for holistic development.

4. LEGAL SERVICES AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

While Centurion University does not operate a formal legal aid clinic, the University provides:

a) Student Grievance Cell:

- Dedicated office addressing student complaints regarding financial matters, discrimination, harassment, or academic disputes

- Free advisory services helping students navigate institutional processes
- Liaison with external legal resources when necessary

b) SC/ST Cell:

- Specialized support mechanism for students from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
- Addresses caste-based discrimination and ensures compliance with reservation policies
- Advocacy support for scholarship delays, documentation issues, or grievances with government agencies

c) Women's Cell:

- Provides support for female students facing safety, harassment, or gender-discrimination issues
- Connects students with external legal resources and counseling services when required

d) Ombudsman Mechanism:

- Independent grievance redressal, ensuring transparency and accountability
- Particularly important for low-income students who may feel vulnerable, raising concerns through regular channels

Impact: While not comprehensive legal services, these mechanisms provide essential advocacy and support, particularly for first-generation learners unfamiliar with institutional processes.

5. COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMPLEMENTING BASIC SERVICES

Beyond subsidized food, housing, and transportation, Centurion University provides additional financial support that ensuring holistic enablement:

A. Scholarship Ecosystem (AY 2024-25 Evidence)

Direct Financial Support:

- 645 students received ₹1.43 crores across multiple schemes
- Range of support: ₹10,000 to ₹73,500 per student annually
- Coverage breakdown:
 - Post Matric Scholarship (PMS): 321 students - ₹75.84 lakhs
 - Technical & Professional Scheme: 269 students - ₹52.95 lakhs
 - National Scholarship: 24 students - ₹4.18 lakhs
 - KVNY, GSSY, GVPY, Child Protection Cell: 31 students - ₹13.90 lakhs

Scholarship Utilization: These funds explicitly cover:

- Tuition fees
- Hostel accommodation charges
- Mess/food expenses
- Books and study materials
- Examination fees
- Personal expenses

B. Fee Waiver Mechanisms

Complete Fee Exemptions:

- 100% tuition fee waivers for bottom-quintile students demonstrating extreme financial need
- Application fee waivers remove entry barriers (typically ₹1,000-₹2,000)
- Examination fee exemptions prevent students from being unable to sit exams due to unpaid fees
- Library and laboratory fee waivers ensure full access to learning resources

Flexible Payment Structures:

- Two-installment payment system for all fees, reducing immediate financial burden
- Deferred payment options during family emergencies or income disruptions
- Precedent of COVID-19 year-long deferment demonstrating institutional willingness to prioritize student retention over revenue

C. Digital Access and Learning Resources

Technology Support:

- Free laptop distribution under GVPY scheme (10 students @ ₹30,000 each in AY 2024-25)
- Subsidized internet data plans for SC/ST/OBC students from economically weaker sections
- Computer lab access with extended hours for students without personal devices
- Digital literacy training ensuring effective technology utilization
- Free access to online learning platforms and e-library resources

Learning Materials:

- Subsidized textbook programs or library book lending to reduce purchase costs
- Free printing and photocopying quotas for low-income students
- Laboratory equipment and materials provided without additional charges

D. Academic Support Services (No Additional Cost)

Remedial and Tutorial Programs:

- Identification of slow learners through continuous assessment
- Free remedial classes in challenging subjects (particularly STEM disciplines)
- Peer tutoring programs connecting advanced students with those needing support
- Academic counseling addressing learning strategies and exam preparation

Mentorship Framework:

- Faculty-student mentoring: Each faculty member mentors 15-20 students
- Personalized academic guidance tracking progress and addressing challenges
- Career counseling and placement preparation at no additional cost
- Mental health and personal development support through counseling services

E. Healthcare and Wellness Support

On-Campus Health Services:

- Medical dispensary/clinic providing basic healthcare at nominal or no cost
- Tie-ups with local hospitals for subsidized treatment of serious conditions
- Health insurance coverage facilitated for low-income students
- Mental health counseling services addressing stress, anxiety, and adjustment issues common among first-generation learners

F. Skill Development and Employability Support

Career Preparation (Free of Cost):

- Soft skills training (communication, personality development, interview preparation)
- Industry internships with stipends to offset living costs
- Placement assistance with no registration or service fees
- Entrepreneurship development programs for students seeking self-employment
- Alumni mentoring networks connecting current students with successful graduates

G. Emergency Financial Assistance

Crisis Management:

- Emergency student funds for unforeseen family crises (medical emergencies, natural disasters, sudden income loss)
- Short-term interest-free loans to bridge temporary financial gaps
- Crowd-sourced support through student welfare committees for extreme hardship cases

H. Integration with External Financial Instruments

Credit and Loan Facilitation:

- Bihar Student Credit Card Scheme: Low-interest education loans up to ₹4 lakh for eligible students
- Assistance with scholarship applications to national/state schemes (PMSS, NSP, state-specific programs)
- Documentation support for students from rural areas unfamiliar with bureaucratic processes
- Coordination with banks and NBFCs offering education loans at concessional rates

6. MEASURABLE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Student Retention and Success Metrics

Academic Performance (2023 Data):

- Overall pass percentage: 80% across all programs
- Demonstrates effectiveness of comprehensive support in enabling student success
- Particularly significant given that approximately 50% of students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds

Dropout Prevention:

- Financial support and holistic services reduce attrition rates among vulnerable students
- Continuity during COVID-19: Zero-fee-default expulsions during pandemic year due to flexible payment policies

Student Demographics (AY 2024-25):

- 82.1% of scholarship recipients from families earning <₹1,00,000 annually
- 54.8% from families earning <₹60,000 annually
- 68.3% from economically backward southern Odisha districts
- Confirms successful targeting and retention of bottom-quintile students

Social Impact

Breaking Intergenerational Poverty: By ensuring completion of higher education through comprehensive support:

- First-generation graduates secure formal employment
- Average graduate salaries (₹3-6 lakh/annum) represent 3-10x increase over parental income
- Families transition from bottom quintile to lower-middle or middle-income categories within one generation

Regional Development:

- Educated workforce contributes to local economic development in underserved districts
- Reduced urban migration as opportunities emerge in home regions

7. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Institutional Commitment:

- Regular publication of graduating student records demonstrating accountability
- Scholarship disbursement data (as evidenced in AY 2024-25 report covering 645 students)
- Student feedback mechanisms ensuring continuous improvement of support services
- Third-party evaluations of program effectiveness

Centurion University provides comprehensive, integrated support enabling students from low-income families to complete university education successfully. This includes:

1. Subsidized food services reducing living costs by ₹3,000-₹5,000/month
2. Affordable hostel accommodation with differentiated pricing and fee waivers
3. Subsidized transportation and on-campus mobility support
4. Grievance redressal and advocacy services (SC/ST Cell, Women's Cell, Ombudsman)
5. Extensive financial assistance: ₹1.43 crores to 645 students (AY 2024-25) covering tuition, accommodation, and living expenses
6. Fee waivers and flexible payment plans preventing dropout due to financial stress
7. Digital access programs including free laptops and subsidized internet
8. Academic support services (remedial classes, mentorship, tutoring) at no additional cost
9. Healthcare, counseling, and wellness services
10. Skill development and placement assistance
11. Emergency financial support for crisis situations

12. Integration with external credit schemes (Bihar Student Credit Card, education loans)

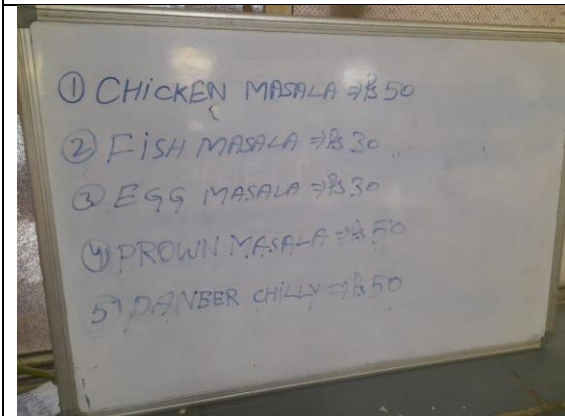
Outcome: 80% overall pass rate (2023) demonstrating that comprehensive support translates into academic success, enabling students from the bottom income quintile to graduate, secure employment, and break cycles of intergenerational poverty.

This multi-dimensional framework directly contributes to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) by ensuring equitable access, retention, and successful completion for economically disadvantaged students.



Boys Hostel

Girls Hostel



Hostel Mess Extra Menu for students

Serving staff in Hostel Mess



Student gathering of first years in Central Auditorium

Welcome meeting of First year students in Central Auditorium

Centurion University's commitment to equity is further strengthened by its emphasis on transparency and accountability. The institution regularly publishes records of graduating students, thereby demonstrating its accountability to stakeholders and reinforcing its mission to provide sustainable, inclusive education. These initiatives collectively embody Centurion University's vision of *Education for Transformation*, directly contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.