

ASCENT 2026

Inclusive Higher Education National Conference

21st August 2026
India Habitat Centre, New Delhi



Background

ASCENT - Inclusive Higher Education National Conference, is the evolution of a national conversation that began in 2023. What started as a foundational brainstorming discussion transitioned into an annual conference hosted by the Office of Learning Support (OLS) at Ashoka University. This momentum led to the formation of collaborative working groups (Idea Labs) in 2024 and the formal relaunch of the Inclusive University Alliance (IUA) at Conclave 3.0 in 2025.

This year, we are proud to launch **ASCENT 2026**—the collaborative annual conference for inclusive higher education in India, anchored by OLS, Ashoka University, in partnership with the Inclusive University Alliance.

Conference Goal: To cultivate the ecosystem necessary to make Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across India inclusive and accessible for students with disabilities.

About ASCENT 2026

ASCENT 2026 serves as a dedicated space for idea exchange, joint advocacy, partnership building, and ecosystem strengthening. The ultimate objective is to help inclusive higher education policies in India transition **from paper to practice**:

To achieve this, the 2026 conference aims to:

- **Expand the Circle:** Widen the geographic and numerical reach of this vital conversation to a larger network of Indian HEIs.
- **Redefine Inclusion:** Facilitate a holistic understanding of higher education that recognizes social inclusion as a non-negotiable precursor to academic inclusion.
- **Equip for Action:** Empower attending HEIs to immediately initiate or enhance inclusive education practices upon returning to their campuses.
- **Strengthen the Coalition:** Build active, working partnerships by expanding the membership of the Inclusive University Alliance.

Key Session Themes

Name	Description
Policy Advocacy	A collaborative review of existing advocacy efforts by the IUA and joint initiatives with government bodies to collectively advance inclusive higher education frameworks across India.
Social Inclusion as the Foundation of Academic Inclusion	An interactive exploration of how social inclusion shapes effective campus environments. Participants will exchange insights from student narratives and cross-institutional models that successfully navigate belonging outside the classroom.
The Inclusive Classroom	A peer-led exchange of practical strategies for implementing inclusive teaching across diverse classroom sizes. This session features shared case studies on shifting faculty mindsets and a collaborative look at leveraging Assistive Technologies to maximize student participation.
The Institutional Blueprint for Inclusion: System & Policy Frameworks	A deep dive into institutional policies, Reasonable Accommodation frameworks, and delivery mechanisms. Participants will openly discuss shared implementation challenges and map out open-source resources to help all HEIs translate intent into action.

Key Takeaways:

By participating in ASCENT 2026, institutional teams and delegates will:

- Acquire Actionable Blueprint.
- Engage in Knowledge Sharing.
- Connect with a National Network.
- Drive Systemic Excellence.

Who Should Attend?

ASCENT 2026 is designed primarily for members of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who are positioned to drive systemic change:

- **Senior Leadership & Administration:** Deans of Students, Academic In-Charges, and senior administrators who handle or have the mandate to initiate inclusive practices.
- **Faculty & Academic Leaders:** Heads of Departments (HoDs) and faculty members interested in creating inclusive classrooms or contributing to institutional practice-building.
- **Inclusion Practitioners:** Heads and staff of existing Equal Opportunity Cells, Disabilities Centers, or Inclusive Education Centers.

Participant Note: Because ASCENT focus is tightly aimed at institutional HEI implementation, primary seats are reserved for college and university representatives. A limited number of seats are available for NGOs and external stakeholders in the inclusive education space on an invitation-only basis. ***Full day attendees will be eligible for a participation certificate.***

Registration Details

We invite you to be part of **ASCENT 2026** and contribute to conversations shaping the future of inclusive higher education in India. [Click here to register for ASCENT 2026](#) For any questions regarding registration, please contact us at ols@ashoka.edu.in

About the Organisers

Office of Learning Support, Ashoka University

Ashoka University is a leading liberal arts and sciences university located in Sonapat, Haryana, and celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2024. To exemplify Ashoka's vision of inclusive education, the Office of Learning Support (OLS) was established at the university in 2016, playing a key role in ensuring equal access for students with visible and invisible disabilities. OLS offers academic accommodations, learning and technological support, mentorship, career guidance, and sensitisation sessions, while also shaping inclusive policies across the university. Beyond campus, OLS has launched impactful national initiatives. These include the College Readiness Program (CRP) for high school students with disabilities, the Accessible Ashoka app, a Corporate Toolkit for inclusive hiring, and Conclave - an annual conference to deepen institutional dialogues on inclusion. OLS is also a Founding Member of IUA and the Anchor Institute for IUA for 2025-2027.

For more information: <https://www.ashoka.edu.in/page/office-of-learning-support/>

Knowledge Partner – Inclusive University Alliance

Inclusive University Alliance is a network of leading higher education institutions, associated organisations and higher education professionals in India that feel strongly about enhancing the quality of Inclusive education in India.

For more information: <https://inclusiveunivs.in/>

For queries:

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