



POLICY ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Policy Owner	MEC member responsible for Transformation
Responsible Division	Academic Development and Support (PsyCad)
Approved by	Management Executive Committee (MEC)
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1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. Recognising the talents, abilities and potential of people with disabilities, the University of Johannesburg is committed to creating an enabling learning and work environment along with an organisational culture where full and equitable participation and progression become a reality for all its students and employees. Disability integration forms an integral part of the University's transformation agenda.
- 1.2. The University strives to create an enabling learning environment for its students with disabilities where their learning experience is commensurate with their aspirations and abilities and where their talents are nurtured and developed.
- 1.3. The University further subscribes to a workplace where its employees with disabilities have equal and equitable access to opportunities and where diversity is valued.
- 1.4. Differences and diverse needs will be reasonably accommodated within the University's physical environment, structure, available resources and institutional processes.

2. PURPOSE

In an effort to support persons with disabilities, and to direct the University of Johannesburg's commitment to limiting discriminatory practices with regards to disability, this policy promotes compliance with relevant constitutional and applicable legislation

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 All employees and registered students of the University are subject to this policy.

4. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 4.1 The term 'People with Disabilities' within the University of Johannesburg refers to employees, students and visitors.
- 4.2 For purposes of this policy a student with a disability is defined as:
 - i) A student with an impairment who experiences disability based on specific contextual barriers.

- ii) Disability, as a consequence of an impairment as well as environmental and attitudinal barriers, substantially limits a student from equal participation in the learning environment. The University accepts its responsibility to incrementally remove or limit the barriers to participation, as far as is reasonably practicable and financially sustainable.

Note: An *Impairment* is caused by an injury, illness, trauma and/or congenital factors resulting in a physical, sensory, mental, emotional or cognitive condition that is permanent, long term or recurring and which causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference of physiological or psychological functioning. The impairment can be visible or invisible.

4.3 In terms of the Employment Equity Act (as amended) people with disabilities for workplace purposes are considered as such if they satisfy **all** the criteria in the following definition:

- i) Having a physical or mental impairment;
- ii) Which is long term or recurring; and
- iii) Which substantially limits their prospects of entry into or advancement in employment.

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4.4 Substantially limiting means if in its nature, duration or effects, the person's impairment substantially limits their ability to perform the essential functions of the job for which they are being considered. This does not equate to an incapacity or inability to perform.

4.5 Within the workplace reasonable accommodation refers to 'any measure that can ensure the entry and/or advancement of people with disabilities in the workplace'. The purpose is to enhance opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities to be,

or to remain, employed at the University. Accommodations vary according to the disability and are determined on a case-by-case basis and must be 'reasonable' within the particular circumstances.

5. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 The Policy on People with Disabilities is based on the premise of human rights, universal access design and the pursuit of knowledge. The University acknowledges that all people with all types of disability enjoy human rights and fundamental freedom.
- 5.2 The University ensures compliance to relevant legislations linked to the management of people of disabilities.
- 5.3 The University pursues a holistic and multifaceted approach to the implementation of the Policy. It recognises the different roles and responsibilities played by key stakeholders in the process.
- 5.4 The University strives, in a non-discriminatory manner, to entrench inclusivity, create equal opportunities for employees and students with disabilities, and create a culture of acceptance of disability as part of the broader diversity experience.
- 5.5 The University pursues a consultative and participative approach to the management of people with disabilities. It is the University's approach to involve students and employees with disabilities in the development and the implementation of its disability initiatives.
- 5.6 The University strives to provide an accessible environment in compliance with all legal and other regulatory requirements that allows equal freedom of movement and access to services on all our campuses. It strives for inclusion of students in the broader learning experience and in the workplace for its employees with disabilities.
- 5.7 It also aims continuously address barriers in a strategic and incremental manner that allows students, employees and visitors with diverse needs to function optimally within the campus environment.
- 5.8 The University aims to keep abreast of all relevant local and international best practice, legislation, policies and directives that affect people with disabilities, and takes note of best practice developments in international higher education.

- 5.9 The University strives to comply with the spirit and content of, amongst other:
- i) The Employment Equity Act of 1998 (as amended);
 - ii) The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (issued in terms of section 54(1) (a) of the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and published in Government Gazette no. 23718 of 19 August 2002).
 - iii) Education White Paper 6 (2013) – Special Needs Education – Building an inclusive education and training system.
 - iv) The Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997).
The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, Chapter 6 (2014)
 - vi) White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy. Office of the Deputy President
 - vii) SA, DoE (South Africa, Department of Education). (1997b). *Education White Paper 3: a Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*.
 - viii) SA, DoE (South Africa, Department of Education). (2001b). *National plan for higher education*
 - ix) SA, DoE (South Africa, Department of Education). (2002). *Draft guidelines for implementation of inclusive education*
- 5.10 The University is also committed to making its own contribution to the broader higher education sector specific in relation to disability equity and integration.
- 5.11 As the custodian of knowledge and education the University will promote further learning in the subject matter of disability contributing to expertise and excellence in the field.
- 5.12 This policy and the benefits afforded by it are based upon voluntary disclosure and self-identification, unless the disability is visible and self-explanatory.
- 5.13 The University reserves its right to verify a person's disability status based on medical evidence, should it deem it necessary.

6. STUDENTS

- 6.1 The University recognises that students with a disability may access the learning experience differently from their non-disabled counterparts. The admission of students with disabilities is subject to the admission requirements of the University.

- 6.2 The University subscribes to a social model of dealing with disability and recognises it as a function of an impairment, the interaction with the environment and societal attitudes. Deficiencies in environmental design and a lack of awareness constitute societal barriers for the full integration of people with disabilities.
- 6.3 The University endeavours to continually improve all aspects of accessibility for its students – physically, technologically and socially. Universal access facilitates the whole learning cycle including aspects such as an understanding of the learning content, as well as campus experiences that lead to the full development of the student, integration, and participation within the broader student community.
- 6.4 The support and integration of students with disabilities is facilitated by the PsyCaD: Disability Unit.
- 6.5 PsyCaD: Disability Unit concerns itself with the position of students with disabilities and serves as the central point of contact for any student or prospective student with a disability.
- 6.6 Students with disabilities are welcome to report concerns and request assistance and support to enable them to be included in all aspects of university life on equal terms with other students.
- 6.7 At the beginning of every year, the PsyCaD: Disability Unit conducts a survey of all the registered students with disabilities (in accordance with the HEMIS classification system) and assists them as far as reasonably possible and within available resources. The student database is continuously updated to ensure that a proper information management system is in place.
- 6.8 The special support needs and reasonable accommodation requests of students with disabilities are considered on the recommendation of, professionals including registered medical and other health professionals registered with a professional body. Consultation occurs between the requesting student and the PsyCaD: Disability Unit who forwards requests to an ad hoc Committee, comprising of relevant professionals and faculty based experts for consideration and decision-making. The Committee's recommendations are then communicated to the respective Executive Dean, Lecturers, and Faculty Administration for implementation. The measures put in place must serve the purpose for which they were intended and the University undertakes to apply resourceful and customised

solutions to meet individual needs. All types of disabilities will be catered for as far as reasonably possible.

- 6.9 The confidential nature of information regarding the disability status of a student is honoured and the information released to appropriate UJ stakeholders only with the written consent of the student (or, where applicable, the student's parent or guardian) if considered necessary in order to promote a student's academic and academic-related interests.
- 6.10 The PsyCaD: Disability Unit Standard Operating Procedures must be read together with this Policy.

7. EMPLOYEES

The management of people with disabilities forms part of the Institutional Transformation agenda as well as the Employment Equity policy adopted by the University.

People with disabilities will not be discriminated against in job selection, dismissed, removed from normal duty or isolated solely on grounds of disability.

- 7.1 The University will endeavour to ensure that any prejudice against victimisation of a person with a disability or unfair discrimination on grounds of disability will be managed through the appropriate procedure. This encompasses, but not limited to:
- 7.1.1 Resourcing procedures, including advertising and selection criteria;
 - 7.1.2 Appointments and the appointment process;
 - 7.1.3 Job classification and/or grading;
 - 7.1.4 Remuneration, employment benefits and terms of conditions of employment;
 - 7.1.5 Job assignment;
 - 7.1.6 Working environment and facilities;
 - 7.1.7 Training and development;
 - 7.1.8 Performance evaluation systems, promotion, transfer and demotion; and
 - 7.1.9 Disciplinary/incapacity measures short of dismissal.

- 7.2 The University commits itself to the reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities with regard to physical, medical and environmental aid to ensure enhancement of the person's working conditions and performance.

8. VISITORS

- 8.1 As far as visitors, including parents, community members, other lecturing staff, and service providers are concerned, the University strives to create a disability friendly, accessible and non-discriminatory environment where people with disabilities have freedom of movement, they are treated with respect and internal role players are sensitive to their accommodation needs.
- 8.2 The PsyCaD: Disability Unit serves as point of contact, if required, from where the necessary referrals can be made.

9. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- 9.1 The University undertakes to facilitate access to information for people with print disabilities and will strive to make, amongst other, the Library services accessible.
- 9.2 University communications, including its website, will take cognisance of the need for information in accessible format.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities are encouraged to come forward personally and to notify the University of any concerns, obstacles and needs associated with their disability, which requires the attention of the relevant decision makers within the University to attempt and find reasonable accommodations wherever possible.

11. GOVERNANCE

11.1 PsyCaD: Disability Unit

The Disability Unit resides within the Centre for Psychological Services and Career Development (PsyCaD). This unit is responsible for the co-ordination of academic support and integration of students with disabilities in collaboration with divisions and Faculties. Therefore, all appropriate UJ staff are responsible in the implementation of support to persons with disabilities

With regard to students with disabilities, the PsyCaD: Disability Unit amongst other:

- i) Provides guidance and counselling services.
- ii) Identifies and determines specific support needs in consultation with the student.
- iii) Attempts to provide practical solutions to their needs.
- iv) Liaises on accessibility issues with faculties and divisions.
- v) Helps the students to familiarize themselves with the campus, depending on their special needs.
- vi) Brings the situation of every student with a disability to the attention of the respective line managers in faculties and divisions.
- vii) Provides assistance with access to learning aids and assistive technology
- viii) Incorporates the students in one or more of the support programmes presented by the University, if this is deemed necessary or useful.
- ix) Provides assistance to students with disabilities to address their special needs.

In addition the Office:

- i) Advises on support for employees' with disabilities, when required.
- ii) Provides service support to visitors with disabilities, when required.
- iii) Provides advice to the MEC Committee: Transformation Committee on the provision and maintenance of infrastructure on all campus sites, involvement in fundraising drives and awareness campaigns.
- iv) Acts as change agent on campus to facilitate disability equity and integration
- v) Actively raise awareness amongst all internal role players on disability matters and this policy's principles;
- vi) Work together with other role players to achieve the University's Transformation Plan objectives and targets;
- vii) Facilitate access to student and institutional funding opportunities.

11.2 Human Resources Division

11.2.1 The Human Resources Division is responsible for the development and implementation of best practice and legally compliant policies and procedures throughout the employment cycle to ensure the attraction, integration, progression

and upward mobility of employees with disabilities.

11.2.2 The Division: Human Resources is responsible for the provision of advice and the coordination of activities in respect of employees and prospective employees with disabilities.

11.3 **MEC Committee: Transformation Committee**

The **governance** in respect of support for people with disabilities is undertaken by the *Transformation Committee*.

12. **REPORTING**

The Transformation Committee is a sub-committee of the Management Executive Committee (MEC). It reports to the MEC on its activities.

Amendments approved by the MEC on 24 November 2020.