



East African University Rwanda



DISABILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

September, 2016

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1. Introductory Statement

- 1.1. East African University Rwanda (EAUR) is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for disabled staff and students and aims to create an environment which enables them to participate fully in the life of the University. This policy also extends to members of the public using University premises and services. The objective of the policy is to ensure that members of the University community with disabilities (mental or physical) have access to both facilities and a learning environment that is, wherever reasonably possible, comparable to that of their non-disabled peers. This policy recognizes that disabled students and staff are an integral part of the university community. It takes as its starting point the premise that accessible and appropriate provision is not 'additional' but a core element of the overall service which the University makes available.
- 1.2. To advance disability equality, the University will:
 - a. Ensure potential and current staff, students and visitors with disabilities are not discriminated against
 - b. Ensure that anticipatory action is taken to provide inclusive learning and teaching and access to our facilities and services
 - c. Ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place for staff, students, applicants and visitors with disabilities
 - d. Support the retention, development and progression of disabled staff and students
 - e. Promote a positive working and studying environment for disabled staff and students
 - f. Provide training and support for managers to ensure they are equipped to provide the necessary support and can respond appropriately to the needs of staff with disabilities.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. All staff of the University are expected to be aware of this policy and the legal framework and to treat disabled people, whether students, staff or members of the public, in accordance with these provisions. In particular, Heads of Schools/Departments and others in management positions will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and legal framework are communicated effectively through staff development programs and are being implemented in their area. Disability training, equality guidance, information on good practice and support will be made available for all EAUR staff on website www.eaur.ac.rw

3. Definition of Disability

- 3.1. A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disability covers a wide range of physical and

mental impairments, including physical and mobility difficulties, hearing impairments, visual impairments, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems. For more information about the legislation relating to disability discrimination visit www.eaur.ac.rw

4. Policies, Procedures and Activities

- 4.1. The University will ensure that in all policies, procedures, functions and activities, including strategic planning and resource allocation, consideration is given to the means of enabling disabled students and staff full participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the institution.
- 4.2. The University's publicity, program details and general information will be accessible to people with disabilities.
- 4.3. A rolling program of adjustments will be established to make existing buildings accessible, based on priorities outlined in current access audits and financial resources.

5. Disclosure and Confidentiality

- 5.1. The University is mindful of its responsibilities towards disable people and will ensure the needs of disabled staff and students are not compromised by the competing requirements of this policy with the responsibilities it places on the University in respect of the disable people.
- 5.2. The University will develop an environment within which individuals feel able to disclose their disability. Encouragement and opportunity will be given to students and staff to disclose any disability that may have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities so that a discussion can take place about disability-related reasonable adjustments or other support that may be required. Individuals can choose to bring someone to accompany them at meetings to provide extra support if required.
- 5.3. The University will also encourage students and staff to disclose any condition which in the short term has substantial impact on their day to day activities to ensure that appropriate support can be provided.
- 5.4. Disclosing a disability is a personal matter and it is up to individuals whether they decide to tell the University and if so when to do this. However, if opportunities have been given to disclose a disability and an individual decides not to, the University cannot make adjustments. In case of concerns about disclosure and confidentially it is referred to the Career Guidance Unit.

- 5.5. Disclosed information will be treated in the strictest confidence. The University will require explicit, informed and written authority for the giving of consent in respect of the processing, both internally within the University and externally by third parties, of any sensitive personal information which is disclosed.
- 5.6. If a disabled staff member or student is to work frequently on his/her own in hazardous situations or has special requirements in relation to fire or general evacuation the University would encourage them to bring this to the attention of their supervisor so that appropriate plans and arrangements can be made.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 6.1. The University will monitor the applications, admissions, academic progress and nature of impairment of disabled students. The University will operate systems to monitor and review the effectiveness of provision for students and staff with disabilities, evaluate progress and identify opportunities for enhancement. This includes monitoring representation of disabled staff and students in different University activities including sport, performances and recreation.
- 6.2. All aspects of this policy, particularly the recruitment process, will be subject to ongoing review and amendment, as appropriate in order to improve its effectiveness. This will include consideration of measures which will assist in rectifying any under-representation of disabled employees in the University.

7. Students

7.1. Participation and Accessibility

- 7.1.1. All applications will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability for the course in question. Discussions about the support requirements of students will be separate from that consideration. Criteria and procedures used for selecting students will relate to the requirements of the program, including any professional requirements, and will not disadvantage or debar applicants with disabilities.
- 7.1.2. The University will ensure that students with disabilities will have access to the full range of support services, appropriate to their needs, which are available to their non-disabled peers. Where existing services cannot be made accessible, the University will make reasonable alternative services and arrangements available.

- 7.1.3. A Career Guidance Unit will be established by the University to advise on exceptional (disability) cases which require consideration outside current policy (i.e. where exceptional and possibly unusual adjustments are required).
- 7.1.4. The University will make information available about access to buildings and support facilities to enable disabled students to make an informed choice of University programs.

7.2. Rights And Responsibilities Of Students With Disabilities

7.2.1. Every student with a disability has the following rights:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities available at the University.
- Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information pertaining to his/her disability with the choice of whom to disclose their disability except as required by law.
- Information reasonably available in accessible formats.

7.2.2. Every student with a disability has the responsibility to:

- Meet the University's qualifications and essential technical, academic, and institutional standards.
- Identify him/herself in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when seeking an accommodation.
- Provide documentation from an appropriate professional source that verifies the nature of the disability, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations.
- Follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

7.3. Institutional Rights And Responsibilities

7.3.1. EAUR has the right to:

- Maintain the University's academic standards.
- Request current documentation from a student completed by an appropriate professional source to verify the need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.
- Discuss a student's need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation with the student's signed consent authorizing such discussion.
- Select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids in consultation with students with disabilities.
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids if the documentation does not identify a specific disability, the

documentation fails to verify the need for the requested services, or the documentation is not provided in a timely manner.

- Refuse to provide an accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid that is inappropriate or unreasonable including any that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;

7.3.1. EAUR through its Contact office (Dean of Students) has the responsibility to:

- Ensure that University courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
- Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities and assure its availability in accessible formats upon request.
- Evaluate students on their abilities, not their disabilities.
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities upon a timely request by a student.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except where disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student.
- Inform students with disabilities of University policies and procedures

7.4. Admission Policy

All applications from candidates who have disclosed a disability shall be considered in the same way as any other application and a decision shall be made that is based upon the candidate's academic merit and potential. No applicant shall be refused a place at the University on the grounds of disability.

7.5. Teaching and Learning

7.5.1. The University will ensure that the requirements of disabled students are considered during program validation and review and that appropriate amendments are made. Program specifications that raise barriers to access by disabled people will be reconsidered and reasonable adjustments made to minimize such barriers.

7.5.2. Academic and academic support staff must plan and employ teaching and learning strategies, which make the delivery of the program as inclusive as is possible and, where reasonable, allow adaptation to accommodate disabled students' individual requirements.

7.5.3. The University will ensure that, wherever possible, disabled students have equal opportunity to access academic and vocational placements, including field trips, internship. The University may seek further guidance from an appropriate professional in cases where a student requires additional support on work placements.

- 7.5.4. Disabled students who are doing their internship/research will receive the support and guidance necessary to secure equal access to do their internship or research programs.
- 7.5.5. Assessment and examination policies, practices and procedures should provide disabled students with the same opportunities as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes, which may, in some cases, include alternative assessment and examination arrangements.
- 7.5.6. Where studying is interrupted as a direct result of a disability-related cause, in consultation with the student and considering the specific requirements of his or her disability, a plan will be agreed to ensure that the student's academic progress is not compromised.
- 7.5.7. Where appropriate evidence is provided, that delayed completion of assessed work, non attendance at examinations, deferral or withdrawal has been due to a disability related cause, the University will ensure that this is recorded in non-prejudicial terms in all academic progress files and appropriate adjustments will be made (e.g. study plans, exam extensions etc).

7.6. Student Complaints

- 7.6.1. The University has in place policies and procedures to deal with complaints arising directly or indirectly from a student disability. In the first instance issues should be resolved at the academic School/Department level by the personal tutor/Career Guidance Unit. Formal complaints should follow the same guidelines that apply for other complaints within the University. This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policies, regulations and statutes of the University.

8. Staff

8.3. Promoting Disability Equality

- 8.3.1. The University makes it unlawful to discriminate, in the field of employment, against a disabled person for a reason that relates to a person's disability. This applies not only to recruitment but to all areas of employment, including the terms of employment, opportunities for promotion, transfer or training, dismissals or redundancies.

- 8.3.2. To this end the University will:

- a) Provide equal opportunities for individuals who are disabled in relation to recruitment, education, training, promotion, transfer and terms and conditions of employment;

- b) Ensure that disabled staff are given reasonable support, equipment and facilities necessary for them to carry out their duties successfully;
- c) Make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements and/or the physical working environment, where they disadvantage a disabled member of staff;
- d) Offer all disabled staff an annual review of their current employment needs and future training requirements specific to their disability, to ensure their skills and abilities can be fully utilized at work and to discuss any reasonable adjustments which may be identified.
- e) EAUR will ensure that it follows guidance from external advisors with regards to defining what is 'reasonable' and will seek advice from its occupational health service.

8.4. Recruitment and Selection

8.4.1. All University vacancies will be open to suitably qualified disabled people.

8.4.2. Employment criteria shown in the Job Purpose and vacancy advertisement must be significant, objective and appropriate to that particular post, e.g. it would be inappropriate to specify a high level of mobility for a sedentary post. Job advertisements must be written in an appropriate non-discriminatory manner which encourages applications from disabled persons.

8.4.3. All applicants who accept the offer of an interview will be asked in advance if they require any special arrangements to be made for them at the interview.

8.5. Training and Development

8.5.1. All disabled staff will have equal access to training and development opportunities including, within reason, any which are identified in relation to their specific needs.

8.5.2. Staff who are involved in recruitment and the management of disabled staff will also be provided with an appropriate level of training to ensure they are equipped to assist and support disabled staff or potential staff members.

9. Retention

9.3. The University will make every reasonable effort to enable a member of staff who becomes disabled or whose level of disability increases, to continue working in the post in which they were originally employed.

- 9.4. Where a disabled staff member is unable to continue with their existing duties, every effort will be made to find suitable alternative employment within the University and appropriate training will be provided if required.
- 9.5. In situations where suitable alternative work cannot be identified, or where an employee is unable to continue in the University's employment for reasons relating to their disability, the University will provide reasonable assistance to help that individual in their departure. This may include but is not limited to investigation into the possibility of retirement on grounds of ill health; and identification of appropriate external sources of advice and assistance.

10. Consultation

- 10.3. The role and working conditions of disabled staff will be reviewed periodically, according to individual needs, and especially in light of any changes in their disability. Each disabled member of staff will have an opportunity at least annually to discuss any current employment issues they may have and any future training and development needs. The Staff Disability have rights to form a staff disability forum or Union which can play a key role in contributing to and monitoring the work of the Equality and Diversity in respect of disability-related matters.
- 10.4. This review process will be initiated by HR who will be responsible for contacting the member of staff to see if they wish to discuss any issues but the individual can decide who they wish to conduct the review. They may choose to discuss their needs with their manager perhaps as part of the annual staff appraisal meeting, with their HR representative or with Occupational Health (if any)
- 10.5. The University's Occupational Health Service have an integral role in relation to identification, assessment and ongoing monitoring of the needs of individuals who fall within the scope of this policy.

11. Employee Complaints

- 11.3. An employee who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against on the grounds of disability may raise a complaint through the HR department.
- 11.4. Job applicants who consider that they have been discriminated against should be advised to write to the HR department, giving details as to why they believe they have been discriminated against.

12. More information

- 12.3. For further advice and signposting to a range of information and guidance please feel free to contact the HR department or the Career Guidance Unit or visit www.eaur.ac.rw

Annexure A

Definition of Disability

"**Disability**" means a substantial functional limitation of daily life activities caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment and environment barriers resulting in limited participation;

While "**person with disability**" means a person having physical, intellectual, sensory or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that person;

Functional disability is a measure of how well an individual can perform certain activities suitable for his or her own age and can be defined as either difficulty with or the complete inability to perform these activities. These activities include: playing for children under age 6, attending school for children aged 6 to 17, working or keeping house for persons aged 18-64, and carrying out basic life activities necessary for living independently for persons aged 65 or over.

The Preamble to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) acknowledges that disability is "an evolving concept", but also stresses that "disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others"

Negative attitudes towards disability can result in negative treatment of people with disabilities, for example:

- Students bullying other Students with disabilities in schools
- Bus and Taxi drivers failing to support access needs of passengers with disabilities
- Employers discriminating against people with disabilities
- Strangers mocking people with disabilities

Types of Disabilities

Nine types of disabilities are highlighted below;

1. Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity disorders
2. Blindness or Low vision
3. Brain injuries
4. Deaf/hard of hearing
5. Learning disabilities
6. Medical disabilities
7. Physical disabilities
8. Psychiatric disabilities
9. Speech and language disabilities

However, for purposes of this policy, the above categories can be categorized follows;

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability to include the Blind, the deaf, the deaf-blind, dumb and deaf
- Mental disabilities to include psychiatric and epileptic

a) Physical Disabilities

A physical disability involves the malfunctioning of various body parts. They may be serious or minor and may be hereditary or caused due to an injury. These disabilities may include conditions such as spinal cord injury (paraplegia or quadriplegia), cerebral palsy, spina bifida, amputation, muscular dystrophy, cardiac conditions, paralysis, polio/post polio, stroke, etc.

Speech and Language Disabilities

Speech and language disabilities may result from hearing loss, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, and/or physical conditions. There may be a range of difficulties from problems with articulation or voice strength to complete absence of voice. Included are difficulties in projection, fluency problems, such as stuttering and stammering, and in articulating particular words or terms.

Brain Injuries

Brain injury may occur in many ways. Traumatic brain injury typically results from accidents; however, insufficient oxygen, stroke, poisoning, or infection may also cause brain injury. Brain injury is one of the fastest growing types of disabilities, especially in the age range of 15 to 28 years.

b) Sensory Disabilities

Blindness/Low Vision

The following terms are used to describe persons with visual disabilities:

- "Totally blind" learn via Braille or other non-visual media.
- "Legally blind" indicates that a person has less than 20/200 vision in the more functional eye or a very limited field of vision (20 degrees at its widest point).
- "Low vision" refers to a severe vision loss in distance and near vision.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing require different accommodations depending on several factors, including the degree of hearing loss, the age of onset, and the type of language or communication system they use. They may use a variety of communication methods, including

- Lip reading,
- Cued speech,
- Signed English and/or American Sign Language

Characteristics of the deaf

They may:

- be skilled lip readers, but many are not; only 30 to 40 percent of spoken English is distinguishable on the mouth and lips under the best of conditions
- also have difficulties with speech, reading and writing skills, given the close relationship between language development and hearing
- use speech, lip reading, hearing aids and/or amplification systems to enhance oral communication
- be members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group; as a cultural group, they may have their own values, social norms and traditions
- use Sign Language as their first language

c) Mental disabilities

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities are neurologically based and may interfere with the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills. They affect the manner in which individuals with average or above average intellectual abilities process and/or express information. A learning disability may be characterized by a marked discrepancy between intellectual potential and academic achievement resulting from difficulties with processing information. The effects may change depending upon the learning demands and environments and may manifest in a single academic area or impact performance across a variety of subject areas and disciplines.

Characteristics:

Difficulties may be seen in one or more of the following areas:

- oral and/or written expression
- reading comprehension and basic reading skills
- problem solving
- ability to listen selectively during lectures, resulting in problems with note taking
- mathematical calculation and reasoning
- interpreting social cues
- time management
- organization of tasks, such as in written work and/or essay questions
- following directions and concentrating
- short-term memory

Psychiatric Disabilities

Psychiatric disabilities refer to a wide range of behavioral and/or psychological problems characterized by anxiety, mood swings, depression, and/or a compromised assessment of reality. These behaviors persist over time; they are not in response to a particular event. Many individuals with psychiatric disabilities are stabilized using medications and/or psychotherapy.

Intellectual disabilities

An intellectual disability is defined as an IQ below 70 and deficits in adaptive behavior or daily living skills (self-care, communication, community participation). 2-3% of the population has an intellectual disability -although many fewer than this seek or receive disability specific services. All healthcare professionals will therefore provide services to people with an intellectual disability, and need to understand some key points in order to provide high quality care to this group.

Implications of intellectual disability People with intellectual disability:

- learn and process information more slowly; and
- have difficulty with abstract concepts such as money and time and with the subtleties of interpersonal interactions

The kind of support and assistance they require depends on:

- their cognitive ability;
- The expectations on them within particular environments; and
- Whether they have other developmental disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism and or sensory impairments.

WHAT TO DO:

- Appreciate the types of disabilities so as to be sensitive to them while planning services, training, exercises, lectures, sports and games etc
- Identify the type of disability the student has and provide the necessary aid. For instance, you may provide a wheel chair to ease movement for a physically handicapped or may require adaptations in lighting or the print size, and, in some cases, Braille.
- Assess the level of disability of your student and tailor the intervention according to abilities

Key messages:

- Disability varies from one person to another in terms of levels. Lecturers, students and other University Staff need to be aware of this so as not to generalize Students with Disabilities during provision of services.
- **Each person is unique**, regardless of IQ, and each will have their own personality and areas of ability and areas of difficulty.
- Personality, coping strategies, the presence of other disabilities (motor, social or sensory), as well as the support provided to them by their family, friends and community all contribute to the ways in which an individual engages with others and fulfils their community roles.

General Guidelines for Talking about Disability

- Refer to a person's disability only when it is related to what you are talking about. For example, don't ask "What's wrong with you?" Don't refer to people in general or generic terms such as "the girl in the wheelchair."
- When talking about places with accommodations for people with disabilities, use the term "accessible" rather than "disabled" or "handicapped." For example, refer to an "accessible" parking space rather than a "disabled" or "handicapped" parking space or "an accessible bathroom stall" rather than "a handicapped bathroom stall."
- Use the term "disability," and take the following terms out of your vocabulary when talking about or talking to people with disabilities. Don't use the terms "handicapped," "differently-abled," "cripple/crippled," "retarded," "poor," "unfortunate," or "special needs." Don't say "victim of," "suffering from," or "stricken with" a disability; instead, say the person "has a disability."
- Just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean he/she is "courageous," "brave," "special," or "superhuman." People with disabilities are the same as everyone else. It is not unusual for someone with a disability to have talents, skills, and abilities.
- It is okay to use words or phrases such as "disabled," "disability," or "people with disabilities" when talking about disability issues. Ask the people you are with which term they prefer if they have a disability.
- When talking about people without disabilities, it is okay to say "people without disabilities." But do not refer to them as "normal" or "healthy." These terms can make people with disabilities feel as though there is something wrong with them and that they are "abnormal."
- Call a person with a disability by his/her name.

Words to Describe Different Disabilities

Here are some ways that people with disabilities are described. This list includes "outdated language" terms and phrases that should not be used. This list also includes respectful words that should be used to describe different disabilities. What is "okay" for

some people is not "okay" for others. If you don't know what to say, just ask how a person likes to be described.

Disability	Out-Dated Language	Respective Language
Blind or visually impaired	Invalid	Blind / Visually Impaired, person who is blind/ visually impaired
Deaf or hearing impairment	Invalid, deaf-and-Dumb, Deaf-Mute	Deaf or Hard-of-hearing, Person who is deaf or hard of hearing
Speech/Communication Disability	Dumb, "One who talks bad"	Person with a speech / communication disability
Learning Disability	Retarded, Slow, Brain-Damaged, "Special"	Learning disability, Cognitive disability, Person with a learning or cognitive disability
Mental Health Disability	Hyper-sensitive, Psycho, Crazy, Insane, Mad Wacko, Nuts	Person with a psychiatric disability, Person with a mental health disability
Mobility/Physical Disability	Handicapped, Physically Challenged, "Special,"	Physically disabled, Person with a mobility or physical disability

VERSION CONTROL

Version Number	3
Prepared by	Dr. Ismael Buchanan Aboui
Version Reference number	EDP/EAUR/03/2017
Description	EAUR DISABILITY POLICY
Policy owner	East African University Rwanda (EAUR)
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Internally validated	Yes
Date of Internal Validation	
Approved by	Board of Directors (BOD)
Date of approval	
Amendments	
Proposed Review date	
Web address of this policy	www.eaur.ac.rw

POLICY APPROVAL FORM

Prepared by:

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Checked by:

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Vice-Chancellor /EAUR**

Signature_____

Approved by:

**Prof Dr. Eugene Ndadaga
The Chairman of the Board of Directors**

Signature_____

Done at Nyagatare on:_____