

EAUR SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

June 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

The general principle of making institutions accessible to and conducive for all people to participate equally and fully in terms of gender is now part of the fabric of our society, however, as in other fields of anti-discriminatory activity, the achievement of 'equal opportunity' necessitates meaningful changes to internal structures and not simply a provision of separate services supposedly designed to make the life of a Person with a special need or disability more tolerable.

The policy of the Government is to promote the educational development of Persons with Disabilities through encouragement of inclusive education; and, the formulation and design of educational policies and Programs that promote the special needs and requirements of persons with disabilities.

Policy on the Persons with Disabilities states that a person shall not discriminate against a qualified person on ground of that person's disability in regard to any job application procedures, hiring, promotion, employee compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

EAUR is a new University desirous of making education accessible to all including Persons with special needs in line with the objectives of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions of widening accessibility to high quality standard education institutions to students wishing to pursue higher education. In addition, EAUR is keen on providing equal opportunities and treatment to all members of society wishing to work or working at EAUR irrespective of gender, tribe, nationality, disability, etc.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

EAUR is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for Students and Staff with Special Needs and aims to create an environment which enables them to participate fully in University life. The University is determined to take appropriate steps to ensure that its responsibilities under the Universities, Tertiary Institutions and other National legislations on Education of Persons with Special Needs are enacted in a way that promotes the independence of students with Special Needs and eliminates discrimination against such individuals.

This policy applies to any present or potential student or staff who has additional needs arising from a special need. A special need or a disability means a substantial functional limitation of daily life activities caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment and environment barriers resulting in limited participation. In this Policy, we use the term special need to mean the same thing as disability.

EAUR values the diversity of its students and staff and is committed to ensuring that the highest equality and diversity standards are maintained. Therefore it will endeavor to proactively anticipate the requirements of students and staff with special needs before and during their academic or work life with the University. The University will work alongside members of its community with special needs to provide an inclusive environment to all persons wishing to acquire higher education or work at EAUR including persons with special needs regardless of race, political opinion, colour, creed or sex.

3. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008, Article 24 (5) obligates state parties to ensure that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others and that parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided for PWDs. The convention further states that persons with disabilities shall be able to access an inclusive quality education without discrimination and should be given equal opportunities at all levels and life long learning.

The Policy on Persons with Disability makes it the responsibility of all organs in the public or private institutions to provide safe and suitable access to all buildings for PWDs. The Act requires service providers to alter any practices, policies or procedures that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for persons with Disabilities to use the services and to provide auxiliary aids or services which should enable people with disabilities to use a service by a reasonable alternative method.

The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions provides that it is the function of the University to disseminate knowledge and give opportunity of acquiring higher education to all persons including persons with disabilities who wish to do so without discrimination. The act requires that persons with disabilities must be given the same opportunities as any other students as regards access to all the institution's facilities like lecture rooms, halls of residence, libraries and recreational facilities.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008 Section 27, prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions.

4. PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the policy is to provide a supportive framework for Persons with special needs to acquire higher education from EAUR and others to be able to work at EAUR in a conducive environment.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- a. To provide and protect rights of students and staff with special needs at the University
- b. To ensure that the University provides all students including Students with special needs with equal opportunities to benefit from and contribute to the learning and services available at EAUR.
- c. To combat discrimination and stigma against students and staff with special needs at the University.
- d. To guide improvements to the physical, learning and working environment at the University to enable students and staff with special needs reach their maximum potential.
- e. To offer additional provisions to ensure that members of the university community with special needs are not disadvantaged in accessing University programs and facilities.
- f. To develop linkages with local and international communities, government and NGOs to support and facilitate full inclusion of students with special needs in all University activities.

6. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Every student with a special need has the following rights:

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

Every student with a special need has the responsibility to:

- i. Meet the University's qualifications and essential technical, academic, and institutional standards.
- ii. Identify him/herself in a timely manner as an individual with a special need when seeking an accommodation.

- iii. Provide documentation from an appropriate professional source that verifies the nature of the special need, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations.
- iv. Follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

7. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Every staff with a special need has the following rights:

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

Every staff with a special need has the responsibility to:

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

8. INSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EAUR has the right to:

- i. Maintain the University's academic and work place standards.
- ii. Request current documentation from a student or staff completed by an appropriate professional source to iii. Verify the need for reasonable accommodations, academic or work place adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.
- iii. Discuss a student's or staff's need for reasonable accommodations, academic/work place adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation with the student's or staff's signed consent authorizing such discussion.
- iv. Select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids in consultation with students/staff with special needs.

- v. Deny a request for accommodations, academic/office adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids if the documentation does not identify a specific special need, the documentation fails to verify the need for the requested services, or the documentation is not provided in a timely manner.
- vi. 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;

EAUR through its Disability 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 and staff with special needs and ensure its availability in accessible formats upon request.
- Evaluate students on their abilities, not their disabilities.
- Appraise staff on their abilities not their disabilities.
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations and academic/office adjustments for students/staff with special needs upon a timely request by a student/staff.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students/staff with special needs except where disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student/staff.
- Inform students/staff with special needs of University policies and procedures

9. ADMISSION POLICY

All applications from candidates who have disclosed a special need 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 a special need.

10. RECRUITMENT POLICY

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

11. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a special need may be eligible to receive services from the Office of the Dean of Students. The University shall offer many services to its students with special needs. Eligibility for these services shall be determined individually based on documented need. These shall include:

- i. Pre-admission counseling and new student orientation
- ii. Academic accommodations
- iii. Electronic content
- iv. Alternate formats for printed materials
- v. Assistive technology referral
- vi. Rehabilitation referral
- vii. information and referral source to all University and community programs and services

Students wanting to access services must self-identify and provide appropriate verification of their special need. Eligibility for reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be determined on an individual basis. Appropriate documentation will assist the student and the University in determining reasonable accommodations.

Students requesting accommodations of either an academic or personal nature must meet with the Director Academic affairs and present appropriate documentation prior to receiving services. Documentation must be current, in most cases not exceeding three years from the current date.

This documentation must be a comprehensive assessment including recommendations for accommodations as well as recommendations for treatment. The diagnostician must be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student. The purpose of accommodations and modifications is to reduce or eliminate any disadvantages that may exist because of an individual's special need.

The law does not require institutions to waive specific courses or academic requirements considered essential to a particular program or degree. Rather, they are mandated to modify existing requirements on a case-by-case basis in order to ensure that individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of their special need.

12. SERVICES FOR STAFF WITH DISABILITIES

Any staff with a special need may be eligible to receive services from the Office of the Director of HR and Administration. Eligibility for these services shall be determined individually based on documented need.

These shall include:

- i. Work place accommodations
- ii. Assistive technology referral
- iii. Rehabilitation referral

Staff wanting to such services must self-identify and provide appropriate verification of their special need. Eligibility for reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be determined on an individual basis. Appropriate documentation will assist the staff and the University in determining reasonable accommodations.

Staff requesting accommodations must meet with the Director HR & Administration and present appropriate documentation prior to receiving services. Documentation must be current, in most cases not exceeding three years from the current date.

This documentation must be a comprehensive assessment including recommendations for accommodations as well as recommendations for treatment. The diagnostician must be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the staff. The purpose of accommodations and modifications is to reduce or eliminate any disadvantages that may exist because of an individual's special need.

13. PROCEDURES FOR ACCESSING SERVICES

The Student with a special need shall contact the Office of the Director Academic Affairs and the staff shall contact the Director Finance & Administration at the University for information about procedures for accessing services.

Responsibilities of the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs include:

- Determining eligibility for participation of students with special needs in the academic accommodations process based upon a review of appropriate documentation.
- Determining appropriate accommodations for each student based on the individual's need.
- Ensuring the student receives appropriate accommodations.
- Interacting with faculty when appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Student include:

- Contacting the Office of the Dean of Students/Academic Registrar at the beginning of each semester so that appropriate accommodations can be requested in a timely manner. Students are strongly encouraged to make this contact within the first two weeks of each semester.

- Providing the Office of the Dean of Students with appropriate medical, psychological, psycho educational or neuropsychological documentation indicating the student's special need, resultant functional limitations, impact of the special need in a post secondary environment and any recommended or suggested accommodations.
- Providing signed consent authorizing the Office of the Dean of students to discuss his/her need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation.
- Informing the school Dean or Head of Department at the beginning of each semester about his/her special need, how performance may be affected, and necessary and reasonable accommodation(s).
- Meeting the timelines and procedural requirements established by the Office of the Dean of students Affairs for scheduling exams, requesting assistance, arranging with the School Dean, and/or the Office of the Director Academic Affairs.

Responsibilities of the School Dean include:

- Discussing with the Office of the Dean of student Affairs any concerns related to the accommodation(s) or arrangements that have been requested by the student during their initial contacts.
- Determining the conditions under which the exam is to be administered (e.g., open book, use of notes, computer with word processing including spell check, formula sheet, calculator, dictionary, e.t.c).
- Providing appropriate accommodations, either personally or by making arrangements with the office of the Dean of students or the office of Academic Affairs.
- Ensuring the timely delivery of the exam, along with all necessary instructions and materials for proper administration, if a student's exam is to be administered outside of class. The school member may also make arrangements with the student for the delivery and return of the exam.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of information regarding students with special needs

14. TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

Students with special needs may receive test accommodations determined on an individual basis. "Test," as used in this context, refers to quizzes and examinations taken during the semester in conjunction with an academic class.

- a) Students should discuss their specific needs for testing accommodations with Office of the Dean of student affairs within the first two weeks of a semester.

- b) Students with documented special needs who require accommodations must identify themselves to the University and present appropriate documentation, as detailed in the preceding section. The Dean of students will then generate a testing accommodation request letter, which the student will hand carry to each class instructor. The two University agents authorized to determine appropriate academic accommodations are the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) and the Director Academic Affairs or Dean of students if necessary. Any other requests for academic accommodations from other University entities are not mandated.
- c) Students are responsible for meeting with Lecturers to discuss examination considerations at the beginning of the semester (within the first two weeks). It is the University's policy that students take exams at the scheduled time of the course unless the (DVC) and AR approve an alternate time. It is also the policy that exams be administered within the academic department whenever possible.

Test accommodations determined on a case-by-case basis may include:

- Extended time to complete examinations and quizzes;
- A reduced distraction environment separate from the class;
- Special equipment such as a word processor, screen magnifier, or braille;
- Alternate formats such as oral or taped tests.

Reasonable accommodations depend upon the nature and degree of severity of the documented special need. While it requires that priority consideration be given to the specific method requested by the student, it does not imply that a particular accommodation must be granted if it is deemed not reasonable and other suitable techniques are available.

15. EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE

Exams must be taken during the regular class time unless the AR approves an alternative time.

- Exams must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance in order to ensure adequate accommodations. Failure to provide adequate notice may result in the accommodations not being available.
- When scheduling a quiz/exam, students and Lecturers should be prepared with whether or not any materials allowed during the test, as well as the method of delivery and return of the exam.

Please note the following:

- All test materials, including calculators, will be checked by the Examination Board prior to the start of the exam.
- Once a student begins an exam, he/she will not be permitted to leave the room. In the case of an emergency, the Examination Supervisor will document why the student left and will inform the Dean of the School.
- Cell phones, pagers, student backpacks, hats, bags, etc. are not permitted in the examination room.
- Students who are more than half an hour late of the scheduled start time will not be examined without approval of the Examination Supervisor.

16. DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

EAUR is committed to altering any practices, policies or procedures that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for students, staff and other stakeholders such as parents to use EAUR facilities or services and to get auxiliary aids or services which would enable them to use a facility or service. All students and staff shall be expected to treat colleagues with special needs with the same dignity and respect as their non-disabled counterparts. Any form of harassment of a person with a special need on account of their impairment is unacceptable and shall lead to disciplinary action.

Any student of the University community injured by the discriminatory behavior of an employee may file and submit a complaint to the DVC-Academic, the office of Registrar or Dean of Students' office.

Similar complaints against students should be filed with the authorities mentioned above.

Complaints about discrimination from staff with special needs should be submitted to the Director of Administration.

University policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex (gender, sexual harassment), age, ethnicity, physical or mental disabilities, marital status, religion, status as a Member of Parliament, Political party, and or any other group.

Retaliation against a complainant for filing a complaint, or against witnesses for providing testimony during an investigation, is also prohibited and can be filed as a separate charge under these procedures.

For the purpose of this policy, discrimination is understood: "That no otherwise qualified Person with a special need shall solely by reason of such special need, be

excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in programs of activities sponsored by the University".

17. STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS

A program of improvement to the environment for learning, working and social interaction shall continue to be implemented to support as far as is reasonably practical and within available resources the full and effective involvement of students and staff with special needs.

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POLICY APPROVAL FORM

Checked by:

Prof. Joseph GAHAMA
Vice-Chancellor /EAUR

Signature_____

Approved by:

Prof Dr. Eugene Ndabaga
The Chairman of the Board of Directors

Signature_____

Done at Nyagatare on:_____

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Checked by:

Prof. Joseph GAHAMA

Signature_____

Vice-Chancellor /EAUR

Approved by:

Prof Dr. Eugene Ndabaga

The Chairman of the Board of Directors

Signature_____

Done at Nyagatare on:_____

POLICY APPROVAL FORM

Prepared by:

**Dr Ismael Buchanan, PhD
Director of Quality Assurance**

Checked by:

**Prof. Joseph GAHAMA
Vice-Chancellor /EAUR**

Signature_____

Approved by:

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

Signature_____

Done at Nyagatare on:_____