

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA



DISABILITY POLICY

2024

1.0 Policy Statement

The University of Ilorin pledges to provide an inclusive education for all parties involved in the Unilorin Project in accordance with national legislation, international standards, and best practices. The university's identity is tied to equity, and it knows that its strength and reputation will come from its commitment to equity and quality. To achieve this, the university shall make sure that no member of the academic community is left disadvantaged and that its vision and mission are fully realised. To help people with disabilities thrive within the university community, this policy seeks to guarantee that they have equal access to administrative, extracurricular, and educational opportunities as well as that the university complies with applicable local, national, and international disability rights laws.

2.0 Scope

This policy is applicable to

- i. Every visitor, employee, and student at the University of Ilorin.
- ii. All the University academic programmes, administrative duties, and campus amenities.

3.0 Definitions

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines "disabilities as an umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions," which is what the University of Ilorin uses. These might be:

Physical

Perceptual

Mental

Intellectual

Mental health

Neurological

Physical disfigurement

The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms

A person with a disability may have been affected by one or more of the above conditions. This could have an impact on how well employees perform on the job or how easily students can access the education and training offered by the university, for which support services may be necessary.

4.0 Objectives

The following are the policy's objectives:

4.1 Encourage and support staff and students to behave and think positively towards people with disabilities and help them build the disability-confidence skills they need to meet the learning and support needs of students with disabilities.

4.2 Provide resources for accessible and supportive learning and working environments, including assistive technology and other appropriate accommodations for people with disabilities. Whenever possible, make all university services available to employees and students.

4.3 Make sure that the programmes offered adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and that students with disabilities are given the required and reasonable accommodations so they can participate in and access all classes and written materials on an equal basis with other students.

4.4 Use universal design principles to lessen barriers to employment, education, and building and facility access for people with disabilities;

4.5 Make sure people with disabilities have equal access to and participation in all university-related activities.

4.6 Make sure that the civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights protected by national laws and international standards and norms are enjoyed; and

4.7 Encourage positive, knowledgeable, and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities by providing development support through staff and students as well as other educational efforts.

5.0 Policy Principles

The following general guidelines will govern the university's stance on people with disabilities:

i. Provide individuals with disabilities the chance to reach their full potential by establishing an atmosphere that encourages their participation;

ii. Offer assistance through the Centre for Students with Special Needs, which is responsible for helping people with disabilities have fulfilling lives.

iii. raise awareness of the rights and needs of people with disabilities in the community;

iv. Continuous development to guarantee that all structures and amenities are usable by those with disabilities. This will be accomplished by continuously evaluating and improving current structures, as well as by constructing new structures and facilities that adhere to the building code and guarantee that the university's physical environment is secure and usable by people with disabilities by implementing universal design principles;

v. Ensure that disabled persons have equal access to information, decision-making, and communication channels.

vi. To recognise that persons with disabilities are entitled to represent themselves on all matters affecting them and that resources should be made available to enable them to fulfil this role.

vii. To recognise the importance of individual autonomy and independence for persons with disabilities, including the freedom to make their own choices.

viii. While disclosure of information about an impairment is necessary where a student requests support and accommodation provision, the institution will also recognise that the right to disclose or not to disclose information about an individual's impairment lies with the individual.

ix. It is also committed to creating an institutional climate in which disclosure is both advantageous and safe.

x. To recognise that committed and accountable leadership is necessary for the realisation of disability equity goals and for the change in the culture and dominant values of the institution.

Recognising the importance of communication in pursuing an equity agenda and fostering an inclusive institutional culture is crucial. It is therefore committed to two-way communication where students are consulted regarding decisions that impact on them.

xii. Establish a setting free from discrimination and harassment.

6.0 Policy Areas

i. Student Services:

a. Academic Support: This involves giving students with disabilities accommodations for tests and assignments, assistive technology, and accessible course materials. When necessary and suitable, alternative exam scheduling can be offered, such as adjusting the start and end hours of tests or appropriately spacing them out.

b. Building & Facility Accessibility: Making sure that all university buildings, classrooms and other facilities are usable by people with disabilities.

c. Support Services: Giving students with disabilities counselling, tutoring, mentoring, and other forms of assistance.

ii. Employment

a. Equal Opportunity: Ensure that people with disabilities have an equal chance to work at the university.

b. Reasonable accommodation: Making reasonable accommodations for employees and students with disabilities should be a top priority.

iii. General Campus Environment:

a. Accessibility: Ensuring that persons with disabilities can access every part of the campus environment.

b. Awareness and Training: Promoting awareness and providing training on disability issues to faculty, staff, and students.

iv. Legal Adherence:

a. Adherence to Relevant Laws: Ensure that the University's Disability Policy conforms with all applicable domestic and international laws, protocols and regulations.

b. Prohibition of Discrimination: Prohibition of prejudice: Preventing any form of prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities.

7.0 Implementation Strategies

The university shall use a multifaceted strategy that includes accessibility audits, policy creation, training, and continuing support for employees and students in order to successfully implement a disability policy.

Here's a breakdown of key areas and strategies:

7.1. Policy Communication:

a. The university shall make sure the policy is available via the following channels to guarantee elective communication:

- Its provision in multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, Braille) and languages, and ensure it's easily found and understood by all stakeholders.

b. Communicate the policy effectively: Effectively communicate the policy by informing staff, professors, and students about their rights and obligations through a variety of platforms, including meetings, newsletters, emails, and websites.

c. Provide a clear and transparent procedure for both requesting and granting accommodations. This procedure needs to be open, effective, and considerate of the demands of the faculty and students.

7.2. Infrastructure and Accessibility Audits:

a. Perform routine accessibility audits: Look for accessibility issues in the technology, communication materials, and physical surroundings.

b. Address identified issues: Create and carry out a strategy to remove obstacles to accessibility, giving priority to those that mostly affect students with disabilities.

c. Ensure digital accessibility: Verify that all websites, apps, and online materials are usable by persons with disabilities.

d. Provide accessible learning resources: Make all course materials available to people with disabilities ahead of the lecture's time.

7.3. Recruitment and Admission

a. In recruitment processes, the university shall endeavour to disseminate to all students The university will inform all applicants of available resources, such as assistive technology, general services, and disability forums, during recruitment. All student recruiting platforms and forums, such as the institution's website, shall gradually be made accessible to all prospective students in compliance with the principles of universal design and access.

b. Additionally, the university shall ensure that admitting new students involves specifically targeting physical and virtual locations where people with disabilities are more likely to obtain information about the school's programmes.

c. In accordance with the national policy on university admission, the university will put in place an admissions mechanism that guarantees that students with disabilities are evaluated based on the same academic standards as all other students.

d. Only a proven danger of unreasonable hardship will prevent the university from admitting academically qualified students with disabilities.

7.4. Teaching and Learning

a. To make learning as inclusive as feasible, academic staff will work to implement teaching and learning methodologies that, where appropriate, permit flexibility to meet the needs of each individual student. This may involve changing, replacing, or adding course requirements and curricula, using different but comparable assessment methods, and ensuring that academic standards are upheld, and students graduate with the necessary knowledge and skills. The institution shall make an effort to guarantee that students with disabilities have the necessary technology assistance to access the academic curriculum, subject only to unreasonable hardship. The university will also ensure that students with disabilities can access all outside learning opportunities. Field trips and chances for service-learning fall under this category.

b. If a student needs extra help on field trips or external placements, the university may seek further advice from qualified experts, subject only to unreasonable hardship. The university may gradually incorporate disability studies into pertinent undergraduate and graduate programmes in recognition of the field's rising prominence as a pertinent academic field alongside other social justice fields.

c. Policies, practices, and procedures related to assessment and examination will give students with disabilities fair chances to show that they have met learning objectives. In certain situations, such procedures may involve alternate arrangements for assessment and examination. Academic staff will get incremental training from the university on inclusive teaching and learning, including the variety of appropriate adjustments and alternate forms of evaluation.

7.5. Training and Awareness:

- a. Faculty and staff should receive training so they may provide effective accommodations and foster inclusive learning environments.
- b. Raise awareness about disabilities and accessibility: Organise workshops, presentations, and other events to promote understanding and empathy.
- c. Promote open communication: Establish an environment where students with disabilities can freely ask for help and speak out for what they need.

7.6. Resources and Support Services:

- a. Dedicated Centre for Persons with Disabilities: To support the academic pursuits of students with disabilities, the university established a Centre for Students with Special Needs. Additional resources available to assist disabled students while they are on campus include the University Library, the Unilorin Counselling and Human Resource Centre, the Students Affairs Unit, and the Directorate of Academic Support Services.
- b. The university shall provide resources and support to students with disabilities, including academic advising, tutoring, assistive technology, and counselling.

7.7. Provide a range of accommodations:

- a. Offer a range of adjustments, such as extra time for tests, note-taking assistance, and accessible technology, to satisfy the various demands of students with disabilities.
- b. Establish a friendly and inclusive campus community:
 - i. Encourage persons with disabilities to have a feeling of communal belonging.
 - ii. Focus on strengths:
 - iii. Emphasise the strengths and contributions of students with disabilities, rather than focusing on their limitations.

7.8. Ongoing Evaluation and Improvement:

- a. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the disability policy and its implementation by gathering feedback from students, faculty, staff and visitors to identify areas for improvement.
- b. Keep up with evolving technologies and best practices:
- c. Continuously update policies and practices to ensure they are current and effective.
- d. Collaborate with disability organisations and advocates:
- e. Seek input and guidance from experts in the field of disability rights and inclusion.

8.0 Rights and Responsibilities

8.1 Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

The university's students are entitled to:

- Equitable access to all university-wide programmes, services, employment opportunities, events, and facilities.
- An equal chance to work, learn, and obtain auxiliary aids and services, academic adjustments, and/or reasonable accommodations.
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their disability and to choose to whom information about their disability will be disclosed, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- Information, reasonably available in accessible formats.

Students at the university have the responsibility to:

- Meet qualifications and maintain the essential university standard for courses, programmes, services and activities.
- Identify as an individual with a disability with the Centre for Students with Special Needs and seek information, counsel, and assistance when necessary.
- Provide the appropriate medical, psychological, psychoeducational, or neuropsychological documentation from a licensed professional indicating the disability and suggested accommodations.
- Provide signed consent authorising the Students' Affairs Unit and the Centre for Students with Special Needs to discuss the need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation and with faculty or programs from whom accommodations are being requested.
- Follow procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services.

8.2 Rights and Responsibilities of the University, Faculty and Staff

University faculty and staff have the right to:

- Receive verification of a documented disability from the Centre for Students with Special Needs and Students Affairs Unit in the form of a faculty accommodation letter that may or may not state the disability per student request.

- Contact the Centre for Students with Special Needs and Students Affairs Unit to discuss the appropriateness of accommodations or arrangements that have been requested by the student during his/her initial contacts.
- Set academic and programme standards.
- Determine the conditions under which an exam is to be administered and make arrangements as to how the exam will be delivered and returned if administered out of the classroom using the services of the Centre for Students with Special Needs.

Faculty and staff have the responsibility to:

- Evaluate students on their abilities, not their disabilities.
- Keep all disability-related information regarding a student confidential.
- ensure that this policy is applied consistently so that all students are treated fairly and equitably as far as practicable
- Provide and arrange any reasonable classroom accommodations, personally or by making arrangements with the Centre for Students with Special Needs and the Students Affairs Unit.
- Ensure timely delivery of exams, along with all necessary instructions and materials for proper administration, if the examination is administered outside of class.
- Refer students who request accommodations without official notice to the Centre for Students with Special Needs.
- Create a learning environment that is accessible.

8.3 The University Management

The university management has a responsibility to:

- a. ensure that this policy is accessible to all staff and students;
- b. ensure that this policy is implemented and applied consistently across the University of Ilorin;
- c. offer training and provide resources for faculty, staff, and students to promote understanding of disability rights and inclusivity. Efforts shall be made to raise awareness about the obstacles faced by individuals with disabilities;
- d. provides reasonable accommodations to students and staff with disabilities, including but not limited to:
 - extended exam time or alternative assessment formats;
 - note-taking support or access to lecture recordings;

- assistive technologies, such as screen readers or hearing aids;
 - adjustments to class schedules, locations, or methods of delivery.
 - Physical accommodations, such as accessible seating or workspaces; and
- e) Ensure that all facilities, programmes, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes physical accessibility to buildings, classrooms, and resources, as well as access to digital resources and materials.

8.4 Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments

- • Ensuring accommodations for students with disabilities is crucial. This entails:
 - a. Setting up alternate teaching locations, thinking about the best ways to adapt instruction and assessment, and being restricted only by clearly unjustifiable hardship;
 - b. Introducing changes to lecture and evaluation materials and systems in accordance with Senate approval;
 - c. Making staff aware of each student's unique needs:
 - Liaising with the Directorate of Physical Planning Units regarding physical access and other requirements as necessary.
 - Coordinating the supply of any specialised equipment, such as computer hardware or software, furniture, and equipment, with the Student Affairs Unit, Centre for Students with Special Needs, Computer Services and Information Technology (COMSIT) Directorate and Works Department.
 - Communicating with any other pertinent support staff units, like the university library and the COMSIT, to assist students with disabilities in departments and faculties.
 - Assisting in the training of faculty and staff on the unique requirements of students with disabilities in order to promote an inclusive culture within the departments. Supporting the creation of a curriculum that takes into account social justice principles, including those pertaining to disabilities, among other things.
 - Making it easier for students with disabilities to access and receive support for research, teaching, and learning opportunities.

8.5 Directorate of Academic Planning

- Supporting academic staff on inclusive teaching and learning strategies, such as curriculum design and assessment procedures.
- Supporting the development of a curriculum that addresses disability issues and other social justice concerns.

- Supporting faculty members in integrating universal design principles into learning, pedagogy, and evaluation.
- Supporting faculty in utilising teaching and learning technologies to establish adaptable classrooms and settings.

8.6 The Centre for Students with Special Needs and The Students Affairs Unit

The Centre for Students with Special Needs and the Students Affairs Unit have the responsibility to:

- a. provides consultation and assessment services to students with a disability to recommend reasonable adjustments;
- b. ensure that current, relevant and appropriate medical or specialised documentation is provided by the students;
- c. obtains further medical or specialised documentation/advice to ensure suitable reasonable adjustments;
- d. provides teaching and relevant support staff with advice and, where necessary, to consult on:
 - i. an individual student's recommended reasonable adjustments,
 - ii. how various disabilities affect study,
 - iii. inclusive teaching and learning strategies, and
 - iv. accessibility
- e. The Centre for Students with Special Needs shall serve as the disability unit. The responsibilities of the unit shall include the conversion of texts, sign language assistance during lectures, tests, and examinations, and related assistive technology to facilitate efficiency in job performance as well as teaching and learning. The Centre shall also maintain academic standards.
- f. The Students Affairs Unit shall liaise with Deans, Heads of Departments, Hall wardens, the Counselling and Human Resources Centre, University Health Services, Sports Council and other staff to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are met in the learning and living environments. It shall also promote representivity in student structures including governance structures of the Unilorin Students Union.
- g. monitors the Unilorin experience for students/staff registered with a disability;
- h. provides information, advice and support on matters related to disability to the University of Ilorin community as required; and
- i. resolve issues or conflicts related to a disability between a student with a disability and a staff member of the university.

j. Determine the appropriate accommodation for each student based on the individual's need. •
Ensure the student receives the appropriate accommodation.

k. Interact with faculty when appropriate.

l. Determine the appropriate accommodation for each student based on the individual's need.

m. Ensure the student receives the appropriate accommodation.

8.7 Counselling and Human Resources Centre

- Offering professional counselling and support.
- Communicating with the different departments to guarantee that the needs of the students are satisfied.
- Making referrals to the Health Care Centre for students when and if necessary.
- Providing psychological evaluations of students in relation to their learning requirements (e.g., learning impairments, extra time applications, etc.).
- Providing emotional and clinical evaluation (e.g., serious depressive episodes, etc.)
- If the Counselling and Human Resource Centre is unable to help with an assessment, it shall refer the student for additional evaluation.

8.8 Quality Assurance Unit

By ensuring that policies and practices are inclusive, accessible, and meet the needs of students and staff with disabilities, the Quality Assurance (QA) Unit plays a critical role in implementing a university's disability policy, ultimately contributing to a high-quality educational environment for everyone.

The Quality Assurance Unit's role includes:

- *Policy Review and Development:* To guarantee that the disability policy promotes inclusion and accessibility while adhering to legal requirements and best practices, the QA unit should be involved in its review and development.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation:* The QA unit should keep an eye on how the disability policy is being applied and assess how well it works to provide fair access and results for staff and students with disabilities.
- *Data Collection and Analysis:* In order to pinpoint areas that require improvement, the QA unit shall gather and evaluate data pertaining to disability-related concerns, including accommodations, student/staff experiences, and facility access.

- *Training and Awareness:* The QA unit shall contribute to the creation and delivery of training courses on disability awareness, accessibility, and inclusive practices for faculty, staff, and students.
- *Cooperation and Communication:* By acting as a point of contact between the university's disability services and other divisions, the QA unit shall promote cooperation and guarantee that disability-related concerns are successfully handled.
- *Ensuring Accessibility:* The QA unit shall endeavour to guarantee that all university resources, programs, and facilities—including digital, communication, and physical accessibility—are usable by persons with disabilities.
- *Fostering Inclusive Practices:* By encouraging faculty to develop accessible course materials and learning environments, the QA unit shall foster inclusive teaching and learning practices.
- *Handling Complaints and Concerns:* The QA unit can set up protocols to manage complaints and concerns pertaining to disability issues, guaranteeing that they are resolved in a timely and efficient manner.

8.8 Unilorin Health Services

- Providing all people with disabilities with high-quality medical and nursing care.
- Taking the initiative to ensure the continuous well-being of all persons with disabilities by being proactive and communicating with both internal and external departments.
- Providing transportation and making house calls when needed, among other specific arrangements.
- Referring newly diagnosed disabled clients to tertiary levels of care.

8.9 Unilorin Sport Council

- Removing barriers to participation by providing access for persons with disabilities to a variety of sporting activities.
- Removing obstacles to participation by granting them access to a range of sporting activities.
- Providing support to access other clubs outside the university, where we don't provide their sports of choice.
- Assisting students with disabilities who wish to play sports and gain access to clubs outside of the university where their preferred sport is not offered.

9. Disability Disclosure

Staff and students are urged to disclose their disabilities to Human Resources (for personnel) or the Disability Services Office. Their employment or academic standing won't be impacted by the disclosure, and all information submitted will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality.

(i) Staff and students with disabilities at the University of Ilorin who require reasonable accommodation are obliged to disclose even with the assistance of relevant stakeholders, including the Director, Centre for Students with Special Needs; the Dean of Students Affairs; Level Advisers; Head of Department/Units; and Dean of Faculties. Such disclosure is also extended to visitors with disabilities who are visiting the university in an academic, professional, administrative, or contractual capacity.

10.0 Confidentiality

a) Information regarding the disabled staff, students' and visitors' impairments and needs is confidential and may only be released by the Centre for Students with Special Needs or the Human Resources (as appropriate) when consulting with relevant stakeholders for purposes of determining the extent to which the university shall implement the necessary accommodation or adjustment to benefit the staff, students and visitors with disabilities. Therefore, any information regarding a disability shall be considered confidential and shall be shared with others within the institution on a need-to-know basis only. We should treat disability-related information with the same confidentiality as we treat medical information. Violation of this confidentiality constitutes misconduct under this policy and shall warrant disciplinary action.

11.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The University of Ilorin shall regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it meets the needs of the community and complies with national and international disability standards. Feedback from students, staff, and stakeholders will be solicited and considered for continuous improvement.

12.0 Complaint Procedures

Individuals who feel that they have not received the necessary accommodations or support or have been allegedly discriminated against can file a complaint with the Centre for Students with Special Needs, the Students Affairs Unit or the Human Resources Unit of the Registry (for staff only). All complaints shall be handled in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

13.0 Legal Compliance

The University of Ilorin is committed to adhering to national and international legislation concerning the rights of persons with disabilities, including the Nigerian Disability Act and relevant United Nations Conventions.

14.0 Collaboration

The university shall collaborate with disability advocacy groups and organisations to improve its policies and practices for supporting individuals with disabilities.

15.0 Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with evolving best practices and legal standards.

16.0 Conclusion

The University of Ilorin is dedicated to fostering an environment where all individuals, regardless of disability, have the opportunity to achieve academic, professional, and personal success. By implementing this Disability Policy, the university strives to eliminate barriers to education and employment, ensuring equal access and inclusion for all.