



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



DISABILITY POLICY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Definition of Terms.....	v
1.0 Scope of the Policy	1
2.0 Objectives.....	1
4.0 Legal and Policy Framework	2
5.0 Guiding Principles	2
5.1 Disability Support Desks.....	2
5.2 Admission and Support of Students with Disabilities	2
5.3 Students with Specific Learning Disabilities.....	3
5.4 Students with Physical Disabilities	3
5.5 Students with Hearing Impairment.....	3
5.6 Students with Visual Impairment	4
5.7 Students with Visual and Hearing Impairment	4
5.8 Women with Disabilities	4
5.9 Library and Information Services	5
5.10 Employment and Staff Support	5
5.11 Non-Discrimination	5
5.12 Reasonable Accommodation	5
5.13 Disability Awareness Programme	6
5.14 Modification of Existing Structures and Facilities	6
5.15 Entrances to Buildings.....	6
5.16 Steps, Staircases, and Handrails	6
5.17 Lecture Theatres	7
5.18 Existing Ramps along Walkways	7
5.19 Existing Lifts	7
5.20 Interior Doors and Corridors	7
5.21 Common Areas, Toilet Facilities, and Bathrooms	7
5.22 Heights of Light Switches and Door Bells.....	8
5.23 Landscapes and Pedestrian Pathways	8
5.24 Drives and Car Parks.....	8
5.25 New Structures and Facilities	8
5.26 Ramps and Staircases.....	8
5.27 Warning Signs.....	9
5.28 Lifts/Elevators	9
5.29 Door Systems.....	9
5.30 Toilet Facilities and Bathrooms	9
5.31 Safety on Pedestrian Pathways	9
5.32 Commitment	9
6.0 Accountability.....	9
7.0 Funding	9
8.0 Policy Review	9

Foreword

The University of Nairobi recognises that for a long time, persons with disabilities have been viewed as "different" and, as a result, have been discriminated against. In an endeavour to ameliorate persisting inequalities facing persons with disabilities, there is a need to recognize and observe the rights of persons with disabilities with a view of treating them with sensitivity as a people who are essentially like the rest of the society. Accordingly, efforts should be put in place to create equal opportunities for all, thus enabling persons with disabilities to participate fully both in social life and in national development. As a premier higher learning institution occupying a crucial position in the nation, the university should influence the society to change its perception on persons with disabilities.

In its commitment to promoting scholarly excellence, the university seeks to uphold equality and equity in opportunities through this policy for its staff, students and stakeholders. Through the policy, the university hopes to create an enabling environment in which persons with disabilities can study, work, and socialize. The implementation of the policy will be possible with dedicated support from staff, students and stakeholders – all who I call upon to familiarize themselves with, as they support the university to implement, the policy. This involvement by all concerned should transform the policy from being a mere document to a catalyst for change.

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List of Abbreviations

ICT Information Communication Technology

UN United Nations

Definition of Terms

Academic Adjustment: an adaptation made to ensure that a student with a disability is able to benefit from equal educational opportunity

Cognitive Impairment: Inabilities to reason, understand, and learn

Disability Mainstreaming: a strategy through which concerns, needs and experiences of persons with disabilities are made an integral part or dimension of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes in political, economic and social spheres so that persons with disabilities benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated

Disability: a physical, sensory, mental or other impairment such as visual, hearing, learning incapacity which impacts adversely on one's social, economic or environmental participation in daily activities

Discrimination: a distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of a disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field; it includes both a denial of amenities and a use of derogatory words, gestures or caricatures

Hearing Impairment: a loss that prevents a person from receiving sounds through the ear. The loss ranges from mild to profound.

Impairment: a partial or total loss or damage of a body part or parts

Job Accommodation: an adjustment made to meet the needs of staff with disabilities in areas of accessibility and policies

Mental Impairment: a disorder characterized by the display of an intellectual defect, as manifested by diminished cognitive, interpersonal, social, and vocational effectiveness and quantitatively evaluated by psychological examination and assessment.

Persons with Disabilities: persons with permanent physical, mental, intellectual, developmental, visual and hearing impairment or albinism, which in interaction with the environment may hinder their full and effective participation in the society on an equal basis with others

Physical Disability: an inability of a person to use one or more of one's extremities or a lack of strength to walk, grasp, or lift objects

Reasonable Accommodation: an adjustment made in a system to accommodate or make fair the same system for an individual based on a proven need.

Speech Impairment: the inability to produce sounds. It may include an articulation disorder, characterized by omissions or distortions of sounds; a fluency disorder, characterized by a typical flow, rhythm, and/or repetitions of sounds; or a voice disorder, characterized by abnormal pitch, volume, resonance, vocal quality, or duration.

Student with Disability: a person who has been diagnosed by an appropriate professional as having a mental impairment, physical impairment, neurological impairment, learning disorder, or sensory impairment which may be permanent or temporary and is likely to significantly interfere with educational pursuits

Visual impairment: a decreased ability to see to a degree that causes problems not fixable by usual means.

Introduction

Persons with disabilities have continually been subjected to multiple forms of marginalization and exclusion and thus a majority of them have been unable to fit into the society. The University of Nairobi endeavours to ensure that this trend comes to an end. The policy is guided by the core values of the university which apply to all the members of staff and students, whether disabled or not. Cultural, economic, educational and social integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities in our society is important for them to realize their potential and ability. This shall be achieved through the policy which articulates the role of the university as regards disability as well as outlining the rights and duties of its staff, students, and stakeholders.

The World Health Organization estimates that 10% of the global population are persons with disabilities which translates to one billion people; persons with disabilities in Kenya are about four million. Persons with disabilities in the University of Nairobi are 62, out of who 24 are staff and 38 are students.

1.0 Scope of the Policy

The scope of the policy comprises guidelines on the establishment of disability support desks, admission and support of students with disabilities, service provision to categories of students with disabilities, women with disabilities, library and information services, employment and staff support, non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, disability awareness programme, modification of existing structures and facilities. The policy applies to university staff, students, and stakeholders.

2.0 Objectives

The overall goal of the policy is to ensure the full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in all activities at the university without any form of discrimination, while the specific objectives are to

- a. remove barriers which prevent persons with disabilities from fully integrating into the daily life in the university,
- b. enable staff and students with disabilities participate fully in the educational, social, and leisure activities in the university,
- c. ensure that the environment of the university is disability friendly, and
- d. create awareness in and sensitize all members of the university community on matters relating to disability.

4.0 Legal and Policy Framework

The policy is informed by relevant national legislation and international instruments such as

- a. the Constitution of Kenya
- b. the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2003,
- c. the National Social Security Fund Act, 2013,
- d. the 1975 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
- e. the 1981 International Year of Persons with Disabilities,
- f. the UN Decade for Persons with Disabilities, 1982-1992,
- g. the UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1994.
- h. the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education, 2005,
- i. the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008,
- j. the Human Resource Policy, 2011,
- k. the Universal Declaration on Human Rights,
- l. the University of Nairobi Safety Policy 2015,
- m. the University of Nairobi Maintenance Policy 2015,
- n. the University of Nairobi Gender Policy 2015, and
- o. the University of Nairobi Human Resource Policy , 2015.

5.0 Guiding Principles

5.1 Disability Support Desks

The university will establish eight disability support desks in the Central Administration, in the Students Welfare Authority and in each college to make disability mainstreaming more visible than it is now.

At the college level, the disability support desks will be housed by the office of the Assistant Dean of Students. Overall, the Deputy Registrar (Administration) will coordinate the activities of the eight disability support desks.

5.2 Admission and Support of Students with Disabilities

The university will endeavour to provide reasonable support in the accommodation of students with disabilities in line with the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007). This support will be co-coordinated by the Deputy Registrar (Administration).

It has been a requirement that applicants for admission into the university should indicate any disabilities they may have and the kind of support they may need. Through the Office of the

Deputy Registrar (Administration) and working with the disability support desks in the colleges and the Students Welfare Authority, the university will enhance the utilization of this information in the best interests of the applicants. Below is the range of the services that shall be provided to staff and students with disabilities

5.3 Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

The university will undertake an individualised assessment of the needs of students with learning disabilities, where necessary and provide the support required such as ,

- a. counselling,
- b. medical attention,
- c. extra examination time, and
- d. alternative learning or examination mode, or both.

5.4 Students with Physical Disabilities

The university will constantly work towards the modification of its physical environment to make it conducive to students with physical disabilities by providing these facilities:

- a. orthopaedic aids such as crutches and wheelchairs,
- b. accessible buildings and related facilities (such as corridors, floors, toilets, and bathrooms),
- c. ramps and lifts in buildings.
- d. footpaths that are conducive to the use of orthopaedic aids.
- e. easy-to-handle accessories in buildings,
- f. voice recognition software to enable students who can not use their hands to manipulate the computers, and
- g. extra examination time where needed.

5.5 Students with Hearing Impairment

The university will work towards providing these facilities to students with hearing impairment:

- a. hearing aids,
- b. sign language interpreters,
- c. use of course materials in all units offered in the university,
- d. modification of examination questions (preserving content while eliminating superfluous words), and
- e. adaptive ICT with visual prompts.

5.6 Students with Visual Impairment

The university will endeavour to facilitate the acquisition of these facilities to students with visual impairment:

- a. campus mobility orientation,
- b. provision of whitecanes,
- c. footpaths conducive to the use of whitecanes,
- d. lifts with audio prompts,
- e. laptops (for quiet, convenient note-taking in lectures),
- f. adaptive ICT (screen-readers, screen magnifiers, braille displays and braille embossers),
- g. adaptive ICT training prior to commencement of studies at the university,
- h. digitalisation of university documents,
- i. availing of course materials offered in the university, and
- j. mobilisation of volunteer readership support from fellow students one hour per week of readership per volunteer.

5.7 Students with Visual and Hearing Impairment

The university will endeavour to facilitate students with visual and hearing in their academic pursuits through the provision of these facilities:

- a. hearing aids,
- b. campus mobility orientation,
- c. footpaths conducive to the use of whitecanes,
- d. adaptive ICT training prior to commencement of studies at the university,
- e. adaptive ICT (braille displays),
- f. digitalisation of university documents,
- g. avail course s in all units offered in the university, and
- h. interpreters.

5.8 Women with Disabilities

The university will ensure that women with disabilities, without discrimination, enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms such as the right to

- a. participation in decision-making and other related activities,
- b. protection from sexual and gender-based violence,
- c. provision with rehabilitation and psychosocial support against sexual and gender based violence,
- d. sexual and reproductive health services,
- e. retention and control of fertility,
- f. full development, and advancement.

5.9 Library and Information Services

The university will ensure that persons with disabilities are accorded library services and information as appropriate.

5.10 Employment and Staff Support

The university will uphold the rights of staff with disabilities to

- a. work and earn a living,
- b. have a conducive and safe work environment, and fair treatment in the work place,
- c. have access to career counselling, vocational training, and career development,
- d. enjoy reasonable changes in the work environment,
- e. acquire relevant experience in the labor market, and
- f. have access to rehabilitation programmes that support return-to-work of newly disabled employees.

5.11 Non-Discrimination

The university will not discriminate against a person with disability in relation to

- a. the advertisement for employment,
- b. the recruitment for employment,
- c. the creation, classification, or abolition of posts,
- d. the determination or allocation of wages, salaries, pensions, accommodation,
- e. leave, or similar benefits,
- f. the choice of persons for posts, training, advancement, apprenticeship, or transfer,
- g. the promotion, or retrenchment of staff,
- h. the provision of adaptive facilities related to employment, and
- i. any matter related to employment.

5.12 Reasonable Accommodation

The university will provide such facilities and effect modifications such as physical or administrative in the workplace as may be required reasonably to accommodate employees with disabilities by

- a. providing adaptive technology and/or personnel support as may be required,
- b. endeavouring to secure the reservation of 5% of all casual, emergency, senior, managerial and teaching as well as contractual positions in employment for persons with disabilities,

- c. co-operating with the National Council for Persons with Disability, which maintains a register of Persons with disabilities who possess skills and training and which updates the register regularly for job placement, and
- d. ensuring that, where their disability is not such as to impede their performance in particular occupations for periods for which they are hired, persons with disabilities will be eligible for engagement as apprentices at the university.

5.13 Disability Awareness Programme

The university will launch a disability awareness programme, targeting staff and students in the university, to eradicate prejudice against persons with disabilities. To this end, the university will publish a disability awareness manual. The sensitization in relation to this endeavour will be done on all the levels of the university, and heads of departments, faculties, colleges, schools, institutes, the Student Welfare Authority and the Central Administration will be charged with the responsibility of sensitizing staff and students on issues relating to disability. Under this programme, staff and students with disabilities will be encouraged both to seek freely assistance from the university's eight disability support desks and to be in the forefront in articulating issues relating to disability.

5.14 Modification of Existing Structures and Facilities

The university will ensure that its physical facilities are conducive for use by persons with disabilities. To this end and within its budgets, the university will work towards the modification of its facilities as indicated in these 17 areas.

5.15 Entrances to Buildings

The university will endeavour to modify all entrances into existing buildings by introducing low ramps of less than 0.5 metres high and not steeper than 8% (preferably 6%). The minimum width of these ramps shall be 900 millimetres.

5.16 Steps, Staircases, and Handrails

- a. The university will endeavour to modify existing staircases and steps progressively to have handrails with a design that facilitates proper gripping. The handrails shall extend to at least one tread depth beyond the last riser at both the top and the bottom of each flight. The handrails should be as continuous as possible to assist persons with total visual disabilities; a break in the rail shall indicate a doorway or other way off the stairs.
- b. The university will endeavour to modify existing staircases progressively such that the rise should not exceed 190 millimetres, and the fall should not be less than 250 millimetres.

The staircases shall have lower level handrails at a height of approximately 670 millimetres for detection by whitecane users.

5.17 Lecture Theatres

- a. Where there are fixed seats in lecture theatres, a few loose seats or benches of appropriate size shall be provided for use in positions accessible to person on wheelchairs.
- b. Audio equipment shall be installed for use by persons with visual impairment.
- c. Tactile indications for persons with visual impairment shall be placed at the entrances of lecture theatres.

5.18 Existing Ramps along Walkways

- a. Existing ramps will be modified with time to be usable by persons using crutches or wheelchairs.
- b. The surfaces of ramps will have adequate grips for users with walking aids.
- c. The edges and ends of ramps will be modified by providing low kerbs for detection by whitecane users.

5.19 Existing Lifts

- a. Where possible, doors to lifts will be modified so that they are not less than 900 millimetres for self-propelled wheelchairs or 1.8 metres if two wheelchairs are likely to pass each other.
- b. The lifts will be fitted with clear visual and tactile signs.
- c. The lifts will be fitted with audio and visual indications of floor levels.

5.20 Interior Doors and Corridors

Interior doors and corridors will be modified to provide a minimum space of 1.4 metres square for a wheelchair to turn around.

5.21 Common Areas, Toilet Facilities, and Bathrooms

Standard ramps will be provided at the entrance levels.

- a. Doors to common areas and toilets will be modified to be double doors and to have easy opening and closing systems.
- b. The opening force of these doors will not exceed 35 degrees
- c. Some of the shower rooms in each block will be modified by providing for a sitting area for use by persons on wheelchairs.

- d. Grab bars to aid one get in and out of bathrooms and toilets will be provided
- e. There will be special hand wash basins at a height of approximately 700 millimetres.
- f. There will be urinal channels instead of bowls to make them usable by persons on wheelchairs and persons with visual impairment.
- g. The heights of driers, towels, coat hooks and mirrors will be fixed with persons with disabilities in mind.

5.22 Heights of Light Switches and Door Bells

The heights of light switches and door bells will be adjusted downwards to a level that is easily accessible at a sitting position.

5.23 Landscapes and Pedestrian Pathways

- a. The widths of footways will be increased to a minimum of 1700 millimetres enough for two wheelchairs to pass each other at the same time.
- b. There will be designated entry points into and out of roads to pedestrian walkways for persons with walking disabilities.
- c. There will be seats, benches, and stopping places, at appropriate intervals, in outdoor facilities.
- d. Existing outdoor seats will be modified to have arm-rests and heel spaces which are necessary when getting into and out of a sitting position.

5.24 Drives and Car Parks

Each car park will have a provision of designated parking spaces of minimum width 3300 millimetres for drivers in wheelchairs, and there will be clear signage for parking space reserved for persons with disabilities at all the designated parking spaces.

5.25 New Structures and Facilities

The university will work towards ensuring that new facilities coming up have the following

5.26 Ramps and Staircases

- a. Steps shall be paralleled by ramps that are usable by persons on crutches and wheelchairs.
- b. Staircases in all new buildings and outdoor facilities shall be designed such that descending does not exceed 190 millimetres, and ascending not less than 250 millimetres.
- c. Steps and staircases will have handholds on both sides to facilitate easy access for persons using crutches.

5.27 Warning Signs

There will be advance warning of abrupt change of levels for people with impaired sight.

5.28 Lifts/Elevators

New buildings will have lifts near their entrances, and alternative lifts in case of a breakdown to cater for people who rely entirely on lifts to change levels of floors. At the same time, lifts will move relatively slowly, and devoid of frequent shut-downs

5.29 Door Systems

Entrance doors will be fitted with easy-to-use mechanical opening and closing devices to cater for persons with disabilities particularly those using wheelchairs.

5.30 Toilet Facilities and Bathrooms

There will be designated and clearly labelled toilets and bathrooms for persons with disabilities. These facilities shall have a minimum size of between 1250 millimetres and 1400 millimetres for a wheelchair to turn .

5.31 Safety on Pedestrian Pathways

There will be barriers and guardrails for the easy detection by persons with visual impairment.

5.32 Commitment

The university commits itself to

- a. provide adequate service to persons with disabilities as required,
- b. consult regularly with and staff and students with disabilities on matters affecting their wellbeing,
- c. ensure that staff and students are adequately sensitized on matters relating to disability,
- d. ensure that its premises are disability friendly,
- e. remove barriers deterring the enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities, and
- f. adhere to national and international laws governing rights of persons with disabilities.

6.0 Accountability

The Vice Chancellor will be responsible for the implementation of the policy.

7.0 Funding

The university will fund the implementation of the policy.

8.0 Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed after every five years or as need may arise.