



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SWDs) POLICY Draft

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2006 (section 5 a and b) states that Government shall 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.

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, Government has been facing challenges with implementation of disability policies. 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 Disability more tolerable.

Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU) is a new University desirous of making education accessible to all including Persons with Disabilities in linewith the objectives of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 of widening accessibility to high quality standard institutions to students wishing to pursue higher education.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU) is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for Students with Disabilities 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 and Other Tertiary Institutions' Act, 2001 and other National pieces of legislation on Education of Persons with Disabilities are enacted in a way that promotes the independence of students with disabilities and which tackles and eliminates discrimination against such individuals.

This policy applies to any present or potential student who has additional needs arising from a disability. For the purposes of this policy, disability means a substantial functional limitation of daily life activities caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment and environment barriers resulting in limited participation.

The University values the diversity of its student population and is committed to ensuring that the highest equality and diversity standards are maintained. It will endeavor to proactively anticipate the requirements of Students with Disabilities before and during their academic life while at the University. The University will endeavor to provide information to applicants about course requirements. The University will work alongside Students with Disabilities to provide an inclusive environment to all persons wishing to acquire higher education, including persons with disabilities 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 Persons with Disability Act , 2006 Section 19 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.

Section 24(2) (b) of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 (as amended) 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 recreation facilities.

Persons with disabilities should receive the support required within the general education system including effective individualized support measures to maximize academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

4. PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the policy is to provide a supportive framework for Persons with disabilities to acquire higher education.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- a) To provide and protect rights of students with disabilities at the University
- b) To ensure that the University provides all students including Students with Disabilities (SWDs) with equal opportunities to benefit from and contribute to the learning and services available at Uganda Technology and Management University.
- c) To combat discrimination and stigma against students with disabilities at the University.
- d) To guide improvements to the physical and learning environment at the University to enable students with disabilities reach maximum potential.
- e) To offer additional provisions to ensure that PWDs are not disadvantaged in accessing University Programmes and facilities.
- g) To develop linkages with local and international communities, government and NGOs to support and facilitate full inclusion of students with disabilities in all University activities.

6. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Every student with a disability 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 disability with the choice of whom to disclose their disability except as required by law.
- iv. Information reasonably available in accessible formats.

Every student with a disability 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 disability when seeking an accommodation.

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

6.1 INSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Uganda Technology and Management University has the right to:

- i. Maintain the University's academic standards.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids in consultation with students with disabilities.
- v. 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.
- 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;

Uganda Technology and Management University through its Disability Contact office (Director Academic Affairs- Students Office) 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. 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.

8. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a disability may be eligible to receive services from the Office of the Dean of students. The University shall offer many services to its students with disabilities. 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
 - Electronic content
 - Alternate formats for printed materials
- iii. Assistive technology referral

- vii. Referral and liaison services to agencies such as the associations of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, Rehabilitation Services, Blind and low vision impaired, Blind and Dyslexic, Physically impaired, heard of hearing, etc
- viii. 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 disability. 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 disability.

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 disability.

9. PROCEDURES FOR ACCESSING SERVICES

The Student with Disability shall contact the Office of the Director Academic Affairs at the University campus or School of attendance to request information about procedures for accessing services.

Responsibilities of the Office of the Include:

- Determining eligibility for participation of students with disabilities 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 Stu Director Academic Affairs dents at the campus he/she is attending 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. This includes filling out the required paperwork, which indicates the student's need (e.g., extended time to complete exams, note taker, sign language interpreter, etc.).

- Providing the Office of the Dean of Students with appropriate medical, psychological, psycho educational or neuropsychological documentation indicating the student's disability, resultant functional limitations, impact of the disability in a postsecondary 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 faculty Dean or Head of Department at the beginning of each semester about his/her disability, 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 for scheduling exams, requesting assistance, arranging with a faculty Dean, and/or the Office of the academic registrar.

Responsibilities of the Faculty Dean include:

- Discussing with the Office of the Dean of Students 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).
- Providing appropriate accommodations, either personally or by making arrangements with the office of the Dean of Students.
- 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 faculty member may also make arrangements with the student for the delivery and return of the exam.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of information regarding students with disabilities.

9.1 Testing Accommodations Policy

Students with disabilities 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 Director Academic Affairs within the first two weeks of a semester.
- b) Students with documented disabilities who require accommodations must identify themselves to the University and present appropriate documentation, as detailed in the preceding section. The DAA 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) the Director Academic Affairs (DAA). 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 DAA 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, magnifier, or braille;
- Readers and/or scribes; and
- Alternate formats such as oral or taped tests.

Reasonable accommodations depend upon the nature and degree of severity of the documented disability. 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.

9.2 Examination Administration Procedure

Exams must be taken during the regular class time unless the DAA of the University 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 testing room.
- Students who are more than a half-hour late of the scheduled start time will not be examined without approval of the Examination Supervisor.

10. DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Uganda Technology and Management University is committed to altering any practices, policies or procedures that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for SWDs to use the service and to provide auxiliary aids or services which would enable them to use a service. All students and staff shall be expected to treat disabled colleagues with the same dignity and respect as their non-disabled counterparts. Any form of harassment of a person with disability 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 Director Academic Affairs.

- Similar complaints against students should be filed with the Director Academic Affairs.
- 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 Disability shall solely by reason of such disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in programmes of activities sponsored by the University".

11. Structural improvements

A programme of improvement to the environment for learning, working, social interaction shall continue to be implemented to support as far as is reasonably practicable and within available resources the full and effective involvement of Students with Disabilities.

Annexure A Glossary of Terms

Accessible: In the case of a facility, readily usable by a particular individual; in the case of a program or activity, presented or provided in such a way that a particular individual can participate, with or without auxiliary aides); in the case of electronic resources, accessible with or without assistive computer technology.

Access barriers: Any obstruction that prevents people with disabilities from using standard facilities, equipment and resources.

Accommodation: An adjustment to make a program, facility, or resource accessible to a person with a disability.

Adaptive technology: Hardware or software products that provide access to a computer that is otherwise inaccessible to an individual with a disability.

Assistive/ Auxiliary aids and services: An assistive aid is any device and/or ergonomic solution, capable of reducing the social effects or barriers experienced by an individual with a disability and include qualified readers, Interpreters and guides; taped texts, audio, visual and Pictorial recording; Braille equipment, large print and Brailled materials; tactile equipment, orthopedic appliance and other devises and services that support PWDs to participate effectively in all aspects of life.

Braille: System of embossed characters formed by using a Braille cell, a combination of six dots consisting of two vertical columns of three dots each. Each simple Braille character is formed by one or more of these dots and occupies a full cell or space. Some Braille may use eight dots.

Communication device: Hardware that allows a person who has difficulty using their voice clearly to use words or symbols for communication. May range in complexity from a simple picture board to complex electronic devices that allow personalized, unique construction of ideas.

Facility: All or any portion of a physical complex, including buildings, structures, equipment, grounds, roads, and parking lots.

Hearing impairments: Complete or partial loss of ability to hear caused by a variety of injuries or diseases including congenital defects.

Inclusion: Inclusion implies a change from an 'individual change model' to a 'system change model' that emphasizes that society has to change to accommodate diversity, i.e. to accommodate all people.

Interpreter: Professional person who assists a deaf person in communicating with hearing people.

Large print books: Most ordinary print is six to ten points in height (about 1/16 to 1/8 of an inch). Large type is fourteen to eighteen points (about 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch) and sometimes larger. The format of large print books is also proportionately larger (usually 8 1/2 x 11 inches).

Major life activities: Functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, and participating in community activities.

Mobility impairment: Disability that affects movement ranging from gross motor skills such as walking to fine motor movement involving manipulation of objects by hand.

Personal Assistants/Guides: Personal assistance services enable people with severe disabilities to exercise their rights to choice and dignity within their own homes. It provides an opportunity to People with Disabilities to regain a large percentage of their independence. "Personal" connotes that the assistance has to be customized to an individual's needs.

Reader: Volunteer or employee of an individual with a disability (e.g., visual impairment, learning disability) who reads printed material in person or records to audiotape.

Screen enlargement: Hardware and/or software that increases the size of characters and text on a computer screen.

Screen reader: Software used to echo text on a computer screen to audio output, often used by people who are blind, with visual impairments, or with learning disabilities.

Sign language: Manual communication commonly used by deaf. The gestures or symbols in sign language are organized in a linguistic way. Each individual gesture is called a sign. Each sign has three distinct parts; the handshape, the position of the hands, and the movement of the hands. Deaf people from different countries speak different sign languages.

Universal design: Designing programs, services, tools, and facilities so that they are useable, without modification, by the widest range of users possible, taking into account a variety of abilities and disabilities.

Annexure B

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

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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

Levels of functional Disability

Six mutually exclusive levels of functional disability are used for adults. Level I is the most severe and Level VI the least. The functions used to define disability are the activities of daily living (ADLs), instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), sensory impairments, and three activities (lifting, walking, and climbing), which indicate how well overall physical body systems work.

- **Level I disability** is the inability to perform basic life activities or ADLs without the help of another person. These ADLs are: getting around inside the house, walking, getting in and out of bed, or personal needs (eating, dressing or undressing, or personal hygiene).
- **Level II disability** is the inability to perform IADLs without the help of another person. These IADLs measure the ability to live independently and include: getting around outside the house, doing light housework, and preparing meals.
- **Level III disability** is either an inability to perform more than one of the following activities (seeing, hearing, lifting, walking, or climbing) or has difficulty with two ADLs, yet reports no need for assistance from another person.
- **Level IV disability** includes persons with difficulty (but no inability) with two or more of the following activities (seeing, hearing, lifting, walking, or climbing).
- **Level V disability** includes persons with difficulty (but no inability) with only one of the following activities (seeing, hearing, lifting, walking, or climbing).
- **Level VI disability** includes persons who have no limitations at all in functioning.

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.

1.1.1. 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.

1.1.2. Words to Describe Different Disabilities

Here are some ways that people with disabilities are described. This list includes "out-dated 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

Cognitive Disability	Deformed, Cripple, Gimp, Spastic, Spaz, Wheelchair-bound, Lame Retard, Mentally retarded, "Special ed"	Cognitively /Developmentally disabled, Person with a cognitive/developmental disability
Short Stature, Little Person	Dwarf, Midget	Someone of short stature, Little Person
Health Conditions	Victim, Someone "stricken with" a disability (i.e. "someone stricken with cancer" or "an AIDS victim")	Survivor, Someone "living with" a specific disability (i.e. "someone living with cancer or AIDS")