



DISABILITY & SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY



DISABILITY IS A MINDSET

MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SUCCEED WE MUST

JUNE

2019



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I reserve special plaudits for the African Development Bank that funded the formulation of this policy. We also offer special thanks to Ms. Reste Ndholorwa who coordinated all cross cutting issues in the ADB HEST project, (TA/CCAHEST Project). Her commitment and guidance cannot be forgotten.

During the formulation of the policy, benchmarking was done at Kyambogo University, Makerere University Business school, Nkumba University and Uganda Christian University –Mukono. I acknowledge the contribution of these Universities, and would like to extend sincere thanks to the following:

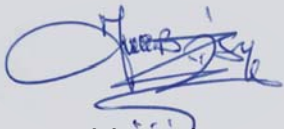
- Dr. Eron Lawrence, the Dean, Faculty of Special Needs and Rehabilitation, Kyambogo University, for the time and effort made to guide us in the process.
- Mr. Muteesa Mungereza Ayub, Dean of Students Department, Uganda Christian University- Mukono for the warm reception and the willingness to share information to facilitate our interactions.
- Ms Juliet Kateega and Mr. Vincent Balabyeki, Dean of Students Department, Makerere University Business School for their invaluable support to our cause.
- Ms Elisa Nsereko the University warden/counsellor, Nkumba University for her insights into the management of the PWDs.

Special thanks also go to the facilitators of the consultative meetings, namely, Ms Twembi Topisita from Human Right Commission, Mr. Besiga John from NUDIPU, Ms Nakalema Gladys, and Dr, Ssenyonga Joseph from the Faculty of Science with Education (MUST), Fr. David Nuwagaba- sign language interpreter from Montfort Missionaries, and Ms. Atwongire Loice. Their tireless efforts have led to the development of this policy for which we are thankful.

Furthermore, I would like to thank our stakeholders who took part in our consultative meetings. These included: Mbarara Municipality planning and Engineering Units, Religious leaders from the Roman catholic, Anglican, full Gospel and the SDA churches in Mbarara, MUST Chaplains, NUDIPU, TUKORE, Kambare UNAD, OURS Ruharo Head Teachers of schools that admit students with impairments (St. Peter's Katukuru , St. Hellen's Primary school TUKORE School, Bishop Stuart demo school) ,the Uganda Police force, Local leaders, Mbarara Regional referral Hospital, Mbarara District Local government (Education Department) and local leaders.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the full support of the University Management in the entire process of formulating this policy, the great contribution of the Technical Committee for the Disability and Special Needs, and the participation of MUST Staff and Students.

I thank you so much. "SUCCEED WE MUST"



Patrick Twesigye

Chairperson Technical Committee Disability and Special Needs

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VICE CHANCELLOR'S PREAMBLE

The International Human Rights Treaty of United Nations intended to protect and promote the rights and dignity of people with Disabilities, the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights of 1993 emphasizes the need for equalization of opportunities for persons with disability. Still in line with PWD's, the Salamanca statement and frame work points out the need for action on special needs and inclusive education.



The World Health Organization report 2018 on special children special people, stated that approximately 10% of any population is disabled. In Uganda, the statistics showed that, "In the central region, it increased from 1.0% to 3.1%, Eastern region from 1.2% to 3.6%, Western region from 0.9% to 2.9% and Northern region from 1.9% to 4.4%".

The national legal and policy documents and the Act on persons with disabilities stipulate the need for an inclusive society.

Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) is in full support of the International and the Government policies, frameworks on persons with disabilities. Many thanks go to African Development Bank (ADB) who fully sponsored the Disability and Special Needs Policy of Mbarara University of Science and Technology. We appreciate the Ministry of Education and Sports under the leadership of Hon. Janet Kataha Museveni for choosing MUST to benefit from the ADB cross cutting issues sponsorship.

Allow me to recognize the works of the Focal Person for this project, Ms. Angella Nakato Muyingo who has tirelessly worked on this policy from scratch to date. The University recognizes her effort.

Special thanks go to the Technical Committee of Disability and Special Needs under the Headship of Mr. Patrick Twesigye the Chairperson. Thank you for the patriotic work you have done in seeing that the University has a policy and ready to implement it to the fullest.

MUST is ready to fully support the policy with major emphasis and accommodative environment, affirmative action and the language we use around PWD's.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to borrow the words of Trevor Ncube at TED x Euston he said, ".... the words we say to others can build or destroy someone". Teachers have a huge impact on who and what we become...". We in the Education Sector, have a big role to play especially with the language we use around PWD's for an inclusive society. MUST is ready for this.

Betty Cheptoeck from National Union of disabled persons of Uganda, (NUDIPU) and National Union of Women with disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), on her interview with NTV June, 2018 emphasized the need for equalization of opportunity for full participation with everybody in society, not special consideration. MUST will ensure that as we implement the policy our priority areas should focus on equality and equity of services, promote, protect and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, and practice affirmative action. Together we shall have an inclusive community, it all starts with you and me. Disability indeed is a mindset. "Succeed we MUST".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Obua', written over a horizontal line.

Prof. Celestino Obua

List of Acronyms

ADB	-	African Development Bank
DVC (F&A)	-	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance & Administration)
D&SNA Com.	-	Disability and Special Needs Assessment Committee
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
MUST	-	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
PWDs	-	Persons With Disabilities
SL	-	Sign Language
SNE	-	Special Needs Education
SN&R	-	Special Needs and Rehabilitation
UNISE	-	Uganda National Institute of Special Education
UNCRPD	-	United Nations' Convention on the Rights of
PWD	-	Persons with Disabilities
TCDSN	-	Technical Committee for Disability and Special Needs

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS.

Disability- Over the years, definitions of disability have changed from an impairment-based approach to limitation in participation. Therefore, as defined in the Uganda National Council for Disability Act (2003) and the National Policy on Disability in Uganda (2006), disability is a permanent and substantial functional limitation in the performance of daily life activities caused by a physical, mental or sensory impairment and environmental barriers resulting in limited participation.

Disability office means a place established at MUST to coordinate and promote the integration of students with disabilities in the University and assist them on a daily basis to address their respective learning and reasonable accommodation needs.

Impairment means loss of a body function as a result of injury, illness, trauma and/or congenital factors that is permanent, long term or recurring and which causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference of physiological or psychological functioning. The impairment can be visible or invisible.

Persons with disabilities as per the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments and/or chronic conditions which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Policy means this policy document and all procedures and guidelines issued in terms of its provisions, and those that may be issued in future.

Reasonable accommodation means any modification or adjustment to the environment that will enable a student with a disability to have access to or to participate or advance in academia. These measures ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the MUST student community to the extent that it does not cause the University unjustifiable hardship.

MUST Staff means any person employed in the service of Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

MUST Student means any person admitted and registered to study at Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

Student with disabilities, for purposes of this policy, means any person with impairment, who is suitably qualified but experiences restricted access to or progression in the learning

experience due to the impairment and/or barriers.

Special Needs means an umbrella term referring to a wide range of conditions which cause a greater difficulty or restriction in a person's learning and performance of daily life activities resulting in limited participation. These needs may be brought about by impairment or a combination of impairments, under-stimulation, socio-emotional abuse or disorders, chronic health problems, traumatic experience(s) or other condition which limits an individual's social interaction and participation. Disability is one such condition.

Affirmative Action means preferential treatment accorded to people with disabilities in the course of service delivery for the purpose of redressing the imbalances that exist between them and other people in the University as a result of socio-cultural attitudes and marginalization.

Disability Mainstreaming means a strategy through which the concerns, needs and experiences of persons with disabilities are made an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and services of the University so that all persons with disabilities in the University benefit on equal and equitable basis with other people in the institution.

Discrimination on the basis of disability means any unfair distinction, restriction or exclusion that a person, officer, organ or agent of the University makes on the basis of disability, which has the purpose or effect of denying a person with disability a service or an opportunity he or she is qualified for or deserves by right.

Barriers means policies, actions, attitudes, behavior, practices, procedures, physical and structural aspects of the built environment which adversely affect students with disabilities' prospects of entry and/or advancement in academia or which have the effect of unfairly making facilities and amenities inaccessible, unfair exclusion or unequal rights to use, enjoy and benefit from them.



The Deputy Vice Chancellor
Prof: Kazooba Charles
demonstrating the need for
policies to keep the
institution focused.

1.0

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Mbarara University of science and Technology Community comprises staff and students with and without disabilities who interact in different activities. The University also interacts with many stakeholders involved in various activities both on and off campus, some of whom have disabilities and other special needs. The University Community and the stakeholders need to have an enabling environment to enhance inclusion and effective participation of persons with disabilities and special needs in the University's activities.

The University, in the conduct of its business, faces environmental, social and attitudinal challenges which ought to be addressed through an institutional policy framework. The major challenges noticeable at the University are environmental and attitudinal. They include inaccessible physical infrastructure and facilities (in the lecture rooms and theatres, laboratories and workshops, offices, libraries and halls of residence); lack of appropriate facilities for sitting, writing, reading, teaching and communication; lack of accommodative communication facilities to and with all categories of people in the University community at all times; lack of recognition of varying learning and working needs (speed / pace and ability) among staff and students; lack of campus mobility cars for the disabled; insufficient affirmative action during student admission and registration; lack of strategies for inclusive participation in all programmes and activities; and low level of awareness about the needs and rights of PWDs by the University community.

MUST has embraced efforts to provide accessibility to infrastructure such as ramps in some newly constructed buildings, modified pathways and some students have been admitted on Special Needs affirmative action programme. MUST used to admit Special Needs students with minimal needs or mild impairments and had no policy on special needs.

The Disability and Special Needs support activities were coordinated by

The University Community and the stakeholders need to have an enabling environment to enhance inclusion and effective participation of persons with disabilities and special needs in the University's activities

students themselves with guidance from the Office of the Dean of Students. It is also important to note that the mentioned Special Needs Services are still inadequate in facilitating and supporting staff and students with disabilities and special needs, due to the existing inaccessible infrastructural challenges.

With the establishment of the policy, the PWDs and special needs are being coordinated by the Special Needs Office under the Dean of Students department. This has ensured storage of data on PWDs in respect of both staff and students; collaboration between the Office of Dean of Students and the departments Ear, Nose & Throat, Ophthalmology, and physiotherapy for treatment, correction, and rehabilitation for the common impairments; talking compound in respect to PWDs; publicity on the university website; dissemination workshops and conferences; incorporation of disability and special needs in the MUST service course; and accessibility of all the new buildings through ramps or lifts.

1.1 Prevalence of PWDs at MUST

Since 2016, the number of PDWs at MUST has increased as indicated in the table below:

Year	No. of Staff	No. of Students
2016 - 2017	3	28
2017 - 2018	8	37
2018 - 2019	5	54

1.2 International guiding documents on Persons With Disabilities

The Alma Ata Declaration on Community Based Rehabilitation of 1978; the International Labour Organization's Convention No.159 and Recommendation 168 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of PWDs; the Jomtien World Declaration on Education For All of 1990; the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 1994; the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights of 1993; the UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons With Disabilities, 1993; and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (UNCRPD), 2006 advocate for the promotion of the rights and full participation of PWDs at all levels of society.

1.3 National policy documents and the Act on Persons with Disabilities

The Government of Uganda rallied with governments of other countries in the world to commit themselves in promoting the rights of PWDs by signing the above International Conventions and translating them to conform to the national environment. The national legal and policy documents in Uganda include:

- 1.3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), Articles 32 and 35, and the National Objectives, Directives and Principles of State Policy particularly Principle No. XVI which recognizes the rights of PWDs and provides the basis for the enactment of laws and development of policies that address their concerns;
- 1.3.2 The National Policy on Disability in Uganda, 2006;
- 1.3.3 The Equal Opportunities Policy in Uganda, 2006;
- 1.3.4 The Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy, 2012;
- 1.3.5 The Uganda Vision 2040 which is the long term national development framework in Uganda which aspires for PWDs to have easy access to basic services, infrastructure and other social amenities;
- 1.3.6 The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2006; and,
- 1.3.7 The Public finance management act.

1.4 MUST Related Policies

This policy shall be applied together with the following administrative policies of the University:

- 1.4.1 MUST Overhead Policy;
- 1.4.2 MUST strategic plan;
- 1.4.3 MUST Academic Registrar's Hand book;
- 1.4.4 MUST Postgraduate Handbook;
- 1.4.5 MUST Human Resource Manual, 2018;
- 1.4.6 The Disability and Special Needs Guiding principles.

1.5 Policy scope

The policy shall apply to all members of staff and students of MUST, individuals carrying out duties through contract or service level agreements with the University.

1.6 Policy objectives

- 1.6.1 Overall objective: To enhance provision of Special Needs Services at MUST for an inclusive enabling environment for both students and staff.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

- a) To promote and advocate for a reasonable accommodation for Special Needs services for students and staff at MUST;
- b) To provide a forum for students and staff with special needs to interact and share experiences;
- c) To promote awareness among members of the University community about the presence and needs of PWDs and ways of supporting them;
- d) To promote equalization of opportunities for staff, students and other stakeholders with special needs in the University;
- e) To create an inclusive enabling environment at MUST



**Topista Twembi from Uganda
Human Rights commission
facilitating during the consultative
Meeting**



**John Besiga from NUDIPU using
braille as the University
counselor Maureen Kahima reads
along to confirm.**



POLICY ACTIONS

2.1 Employment of PWDs

During the employment processes, the University shall:

2.1.1. Recruitment and selection

- a) Ensure that its job descriptions and selection criteria are neither directly nor indirectly discriminatory. This will include ensuring that the selection criteria is appropriate to the specified job title;
- b) Ensure that all the staff involved in recruitment and selection receive training and materials that have a disability equality component.

2.1.2. Induction

Ensure that all staff and students who join the University receive information explaining the University's role and their responsibilities under the Disability and special needs policy.

2.1.3. Employment relationship

Be committed to ensuring that no disability discrimination takes place at any stage of the employment relationship. This includes career progression, renewal of fixed term contracts, pay and other benefits, training and development, grievance procedures and disciplinary procedures.

2.2. Admissions, access and participation of Students with Disabilities and other Special Needs

2.2.1. Student Admission and participation

- a) Admission of students into the different programmes is primarily based on merit. Those who meet the academic entry requirements are admitted through a competitive selection process. However, students with disabilities shall have an opportunity to benefit from the affirmative action as guided by the National Joint Admissions Board;
- b) The University shall ensure that any information pertaining to a disability, provided on application to the University, will be recorded and contact will be made with the student to encourage early discussions about the reasonable adjustments that will be required;

- c) Students shall be given every opportunity throughout the application process to disclose a disability;
- d) The University shall avail information regarding the support available to students with disabilities and the degree of physical access to and between university buildings;
- e) If the applicant is not offered a place at the University on grounds other than academic, the reasons for the decision will be documented. Feedback on the decision will be provided to the applicant on request;
- f) The University Disability Policy values and its duty to promote disability equality will be expressed in the promotional materials.

2.3. Research

As an academic institution, MUST shall promote research on special needs and disability by encouraging and supporting staff and students to carry out research with a focus on Special needs and PWDs at both National and International Levels.

2.3.1 Objectives of the research

- a) To encourage research in Special Needs Education, Disability Studies and related fields for better understanding, development and improvement of services for Persons with Disabilities and other special needs;
- b) To initiate and run outreach programmes to promote greater awareness among teachers, parents, community leaders and the general public about Persons with Disabilities and other special needs;
- c) To promote partnerships and collaboration among agencies involved in disability service provision and other relevant service areas.

2.3.2 Focus of the Research

Disability and special needs research will mainly focus on the PWDs' medical, social technological current and developmental trends, particularly:

- a) How to have an inclusive MUST community;
- b) Policy and theoretical analyses of schools, systems and support structures;
- c) Developing methods and methodologies, particularly participatory research;
- d) The use of innovative and current Technologies for PWDs;
- e) Language and literacy;
- f) Cognitive and developmental needs;

- g) Professional development, particularly with reference to e-learning;
- h) The circumstances and needs of particular special educational needs and disability groups.

2.4. Collaborations, Networks, and Partnerships

These shall be at both national and international level with the aim of enabling the University to establish a Disability Unit and give support to the staff and students with special needs and disability by:

- 2.4.1 Creating opportunities for collaboration with support from relevant experts, with a focus on how to improve next Generation Science Standard of PWDs;
- 2.4.2 Identifying participants to build networks at national, regional, or local networks that will enable the MUST community, policy makers, science experts, and education researchers to collaboratively solve problems and learn from others' implementation efforts. Students and staff shall be encouraged to participate in such networks as appropriate;
- 2.4.3 Cultivating partnerships and identifying partners in the region and community that have the expertise, motivation, or resources to be support fundraising, donations and grants in our efforts to implement the policy.

2.5. Outreach and community based programmes

Through outreach and community based programmes:

- 2.5.1 People with disabilities shall access rehabilitation services such as mobility skills and life skills which contribute to their overall well-being, inclusion and participation;
- 2.5.2 MUST Disability and Special Needs Unit shall have out reaches to the community especially the special units, other schools, and PWDs community projects;
- 2.5.3 As a way of PWDs and Special needs inclusion, MUST Faculty of Medicine community outreach programme will offer support in line with the PWDs rehabilitation, mainly to promote, support and implement rehabilitation activities at the community level and facilitate referrals to access more specialized rehabilitation services;
- 2.5.4 Motivational speakers, who shall be both students and staff of MUST, shall go to the communities to offer emotional and psychological support.

2.6 Curriculum, teaching, learning and Examinations

2.6.1 The University shall make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that courses are accessible and students with disabilities can participate fully. This will be done through alternative formats, offering alternative types of course work or means of assessment;

2.6.2 Time Tabling - The University shall provide disability-friendly time tabling for lectures if the student(s) with disability communicate(s) their disability to the Academic Registrar in time.

2.6.3 Interventions

The following interventions shall be put in place to compensate for any restriction imposed on the student by the disability without affecting the validity of the assessment:

- a) Having reasonable distance between lecture rooms for PWDs;
- b) Each faculty or institute shall have a Disability coordinator who will be the key liaison between the Faculty Dean and the Disability focal person;
- c) Special consideration in relation to examination and assessment procedures, but this shall be supported by medical or other evidence and it will be the student's responsibility to make that available the necessary evidence to the University;
- d) Students with severe impairment shall be given a maximum of 50% extra time during examinations / assessment. This shall be on request and having been examined by a medical officer of MUST.

2.6.4 Student support and guidance

- a) The University will network with PWDs organizations to take up students on placements using the disability policy standards of the University;
- b) The Disabilities Team within Student Services will provide advice and help students to access appropriate support;
- c) Counseling and guidance services shall be provided;
- d) Appropriate infrastructure development shall be undertaken;
- e) Information and communication channels shall be availed.

3.0

CHAPTER THREE

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND THE ROLE OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- 3.1 The Vice Chancellor shall oversee the implementation of the policy at every level of the organization and will deal with non-compliance appropriately through University procedures;
- 3.2 Management shall have the responsibility to ensure the continuing success of the policy by:
 - 3.2.1 Refraining from harassment and discrimination;
 - 3.2.2 Bringing to the attention of the University any suspected practices in breach of the policy;
 - 3.2.3 Ensuring that selection for recruitment, promotion, training, work evaluation or appraisal and work allocation, is carried out in a non-discriminatory manner;
 - 3.2.4 Ensuring that academic or course applications and selection for admission are carried out in a non-discriminatory manner;
 - 3.2.5 Curricular including teaching, examination and timetabling, co-curricular and extracurricular activities involve everyone;
 - 3.2.6 Providing a contact Desk or Office for the production and dissemination of information relating to services for Persons with Disabilities and other special needs.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 4.1 The University is keen to creating an inclusive environment where members of our community are confident and willing to disclose personal information referring to any of the protected characteristics;
- 4.2 Complaints of discrimination based on grounds of protected characteristics shall be raised through relevant grievance procedures for staff or complaints procedures for students. Complaints regarding staff harassment or bullying shall be raised in accordance with the Human Resource Manual to the Technical Committee for Disability and Special Needs (TCDSN);
- 4.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation shall be done to ensure creation and maintenance of a supportive environment that promotes equalization of opportunity with dignity and respect;
- 4.4 Monitoring and evaluation of this policy shall be done by the TCDSN every 3 years to ensure compliance with legislation, effectiveness, inclusion, equity and equality.



REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The Disability and Special Needs Committee shall identify gaps that need review and share them with management through to generate the necessary reviews for the university council approval.

THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



PATRICK TWESIGYE
CHAIRPERSON



ANGELLA NAKATO
FOCAL PERSON



JOHN BESIGA
VICE CHAIRPERSON



TIMOTHY MUGUMYA
LEGAL ADVISOR



HERMAN KAZIBWE
HOSPITAL REPRESENTATIVE



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CHARLES KAKURU
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