

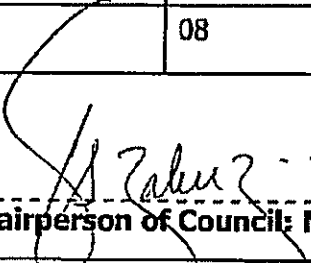


**WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY
POLICY ON PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES**

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POLICY ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Sponsor Division	Deputy Vice Chancellor: AAR
Responsible Department	Human Resources (HR)
Policy Name and Related WSU Policies	
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Policy on People with Disabilities	
change history	
Approval authority	Council
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 ----- Chairperson of Council: Mr T Zakuza	

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The University recognises an approach in which employees, students and visitors with disabilities are seen to be disadvantaged not by their impairments but by social barriers, including the design of the environment, methods of information dissemination, Institutional practices and societal attitudes.
- 1.2 The University further recognises the right of people with disabilities to hold alternative views about their impairment and to personally define their own situation.
- 1.3 Finally, the University seeks to promote the message and spirit of constitutional and legislative provisions which relate to equity, unfair discrimination, dignity, privacy and confidentiality. This policy establishes a framework for implementing these principles.

2. Definitions

Please note that these definitions follow the Social Model of Disability.

- 2.1 "Impairment" means a limitation in a person's physical, mental (including psychological) or sensory functioning;
- 2.2 "Disability" means a loss or limitation of opportunities that prevents people who have impairments from accessing or participating in the normal life of the university on an equal level with others due to physical or social barriers;
- 2.3 "Universal Design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
- 2.4 A visitor is any member of the public present on University property who is not a member of staff or a student, including persons with contractual relationships with the University and persons otherwise legitimately commercially active or employed within the University environment.
- 2.5 "Reasonable Accommodation" means any alteration or adjustment to:
 - A job or work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in a recruitment process or to

perform essential job functions

- General university infrastructure.

The meaning also includes adjustments to ensure that all people with disabilities have rights and privileges equal to those without disabilities.

3. Application

3.1 This policy applies to all employees, students and visitors.

4. Policy objectives

4.1 People with disabilities have the right to equal opportunities at the university;

4.2 The University must actively redress historical low representation of people with disabilities in its employment and student enrolment practises;

4.3 The Vice Chancellor and members of Senior Management provide leadership in improving access for people with disabilities and are responsible for implementing this policy;

5. Positive and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities OR impairments must be fostered and encouraged;

5.1 Needs of people with disabilities must be addressed in a manner that allows beneficiaries to maximize their professional, academic and social potential;

5.2 Only the individual has the discretion to disclose their impairment, except where the law provides otherwise;

5.3 The university promotes diversity and mutual respect;

5.4 Evaluation of people with disabilities must be on the basis of their abilities and not on their impairments;

5.5 The university must provide reasonable accommodation to address the needs of people with disabilities.

6. Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities

6.1 The goal of reasonable accommodation is to ensure that no employee or student is unfairly excluded from any university activity or facility because of their impairment;

6.2 The provision of reasonable accommodation is primarily aimed at removing the barriers that would otherwise hinder the full integration of employees and students with disabilities.

7. Management of Affairs of People with Disabilities

7.1 The responsibility for all matters covered by this policy is assigned to the following:

- The Human Resources Department in the case of employees and visitors;
- The Office of the Executive Director Student Affairs and Development in the case of students

7.2 The above directorates (the directorates) must:

- Research and coordinate the interests and needs of people with disabilities;
- Liaise with the Institutional Disability Committee established below;
- Ensure that all departments provide sufficient information to enable people with disabilities to assess their ability to meet the physical demands associated with a study programme or a job;
- Organise orientation programmes for new employees and students with disabilities;
- Exercise an overall monitoring role which includes;
 - i. Monitoring of employee and students' applications,
 - ii. Monitoring student enrolment and academic progress;

- Prepare annual reports (ordinary reports) and plans for consideration by the Institutional Management Committee (IMC);
- Recommend appropriate action on any specific matters related to people with disabilities from time to time;
- Ensure that incidents of discrimination and harassment of people with disabilities are dealt with appropriately;
- Ensure that special needs and requests of people with disabilities are considered on the basis of medical and / or psychological reports and on the recommendation of medical practitioners. This includes the possibility of more time granted for the writing of tests and examinations, the typing of answers and oral examinations.
- Liaise on accessibility matters with facilities Department and academic departments;
- Continually advise Management on the provision and maintenance of infrastructure on all Campuses to promote physical accessibility.

8. Advisory Body

8.1 This policy will establish an advisory body in the name of "Institutional Disability Committee" (hereafter referred to as IDC). Its composition will be as follows:

- Vice Chancellor
- Deputy Vice Chancellor
- One Dean per Campus
- The Executive Director: Student Affairs and Support Services;
- Executive Director: Human Resources / HR Representative
- Director: Institutional Research and Planning;
- One Deputy Director per Campus: Facilities;
- Manager: Transformation;
- One representative of the Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC), nominated by the ISRC;
- One representative from each formally recognized union, and nominated by such union;

- One employee and one student with disabilities per Campus nominated by employees and students with disabilities.

8.2 The functions of the IDC will be as follows:

- Advise the university, through IMC, on all strategic issues relating to people with disabilities.
- Advise the Vice Chancellor and Executive Management on effective measures to promote equality of opportunity for employees and students with disabilities in the institution.
- To serve as an essential consultative forum that must be consulted on all policy developments relating to people with disabilities;
- Monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of policies, procedures, criteria and practices developed to address disability issues.
- Promote recruitment and employment of people with disabilities.
- Develop appropriate mechanisms to promote involvement, participation and consultation of people with disabilities;

9. Registration, Admission and Selection, Teaching and Examinations

- 9.1 Applicants with disabilities have to follow the prescribed application procedure; however the nature of disability may require the institution to adopt new procedures;
- 9.2 Students with disabilities will be considered for the study course of choice after careful consideration of all implications and within the limits of reasonable feasibility and affordability;
- 9.3 Selection interviews should be sensitive and special needs for disabled applicants with regard to language must be considered, for example Braille or Sign Language;
- 9.4 Faculty administrator's must ensure that the admission of students with disabilities is confirmed as early as possible, so that proper

arrangements can be made to ensure that they have appropriate support throughout their years of study;

- 9.5 Students must be evaluated on their abilities not their disabilities and where practicable, methods of teaching and assessment be modified to take into account, the difficulties experienced by students with disabilities;
- 9.6 In the event that the University is unable to meet the known requirements of a student with a disability, the limitations of provision must be explained to the student prior to its admission to the university;
- 9.7 Facilities appropriate to the needs of students with disabilities will be made available during examinations and extra time will be allowed, where appropriate, for students with learning, visual and writing disabilities;
- 9.8 Special assessment arrangements will be available for students who by reason of disability, would otherwise be unfairly penalized.

10. Recruitment for employment of People with Disabilities

- 10.1 Selection interviews must be sensitive, objective and unbiased. Interviewers must avoid assumptions about people with disabilities;
- 10.2 If an applicant has disclosed a disability or has a self-evident disability, the employer must focus on the applicant's qualifications for the work rather than any actual disability;
- 10.3 If the university knows in advance that an applicant has a disability, it must make the necessary arrangement for reasonable accommodation;
- 10.4 Selection interviews must be sensitive to impairments and special needs of applicants with disabilities to language (for example Braille or Sign Language);
- 10.5 Job interviews must focus on the applicant's skills, knowledge and competency to perform the job and not on the disability;

- 10.6 The university may test an applicant with a disability for a specific job and not require all other applicants to undergo testing;
- 10.7 If the testing shows that accommodation requirements would create unjustifiable hardship, or that there is an objective justification that relates to the inherent requirement of the job or to health and safety, the employer may withdraw the job offer.

11. Student Orientation / Induction Programme

- 11.1 Once people with disabilities are accepted for study or employed, the university must ensure that they are taken through formal induction;
- 11.2 During the general induction of employees and students, special programmes must be held to create awareness among able-bodied persons about their role in providing a supportive environment for those with disabilities.