



SUNYANI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DISABILITY POLICY FOR
Staff and Students



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TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0.	PURPOSE	1
2.0.	AIMS	1
3.0.	RESPONSIBILITIES	2
4.0.	THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	2
4.1.	Aligning Services to The Act	3
5.0.	DEFINITION OF DISABILITY	4
5.1.	Discrimination and harassment	4
6.0.	STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	5
7.0.	STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	5
8.0.	REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	6
8.1.	Adjustments for Students	6
8.2.	Adjustments for Staff	7
9.0.	DISABLED STUDENT ALLOWANCE	8
10.0.	HARASSMENT AND OTHER FORMS OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION	8
11.0.	MONITORING	9
12.0.	CONFIDENTIALITY.....	10

1.0. PURPOSE

This Disability Policy reinforces Sunyani Technical University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for the diverse student and staff body and to review its policies and practices in light of the enactment of the People with Disability Act, 2006, Act 715. It is to come out with a strategic framework for the University to create an enabling environment for persons captured in the act and to ensure access to teaching, learning and research.

The policy outlines the University's duties and the options available to staff and students with disabilities in seeking support or adjustments to their working and studying environment.

The University is committed to working towards operationalising the Disability Act of 2006; this involves addressing the barriers to inclusion (structural, cultural, organisational and attitudinal) which adversely impact upon disabled people, and affect the ability to meet their needs, rights and requirements.

2.0. AIMS

This Disability Policy is aimed at:

1. Setting out the University's commitment to disabled students and staff,

2. Providing a framework to contribute to the on-going development of an enabling environment for all members and service users of the University,
3. Addressing the specific operational challenges for staff and students,
4. Providing a guide for managers, staff and students.

3.0. RESPONSIBILITIES

The University is responsible for the well-being of current disabled staff and students, and actively encourage disabled students and staff to join the University. These responsibilities are delegated to the Joint Admissions Board, Students' Affairs Committee, Health Committee, Counselling Unit and any other appropriate representatives of staff and students charged to ensure support for both disabled students and staff. In addition, certain departments are given particular responsibilities to perform specific activities that will ensure the achievement of the objectives.

4.0. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The People with Disability Act, 2006, Act 715, outlines a number of required duties and specifically places a general duty on all

Higher Education Institutions to promote disability equality.

Related to this obligation the University is required to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination,
2. Eliminate harassment of disabled people,
3. Promote equality of opportunities between disabled people and other people,
4. Involve disabled people in the formulation of actions,
5. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people,
6. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life,
7. Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment,
8. Identify and analyse potential discriminatory policies, practices and procedures in all aspects of the University and review them in accordance with the act.

4.1. Aligning Services to The Act

The University adopts an anticipatory approach which requires proactive consideration of access to services and facilities that ensures that adjustments are made in advance for disabled people to use its services and/or access education. As a consequence, the University has embarked on a policy of ensuring that all new physical infrastructure and building facilities as well those under

renovation factor the disabled in the community. Also, to ensure easy access to lecture halls, library and other learning facilities, all disabled students automatically qualify for accommodation on campus.

5.0. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The act's definition of disability includes those with physical or mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, medical conditions, mental health difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions.

The formal definition as contained in the Act is "A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities"

5.1. Discrimination and harassment

These are not limited to those people who are themselves disabled but also apply to those associated with disability i.e. a career for a disabled child.

6.0. STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

It is the aim of the University to recruit, train, develop and retain disabled people. The University monitors self-declaration of disability at both application and appointment stage. As part of staff recruitment, the University ensures that applicants are not disqualified based on their disability status.

All managers who conduct the annual review of their staff are to pay attention to the developmental needs of disabled staff together with discussing any reasonable adjustments which might have been identified.

7.0. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University welcomes applications from disabled people and those with specific learning difficulties. We encourage existing students and applicants to declare a disability or specific learning difficulty either on application or any time thereafter in order that they can be made aware of possible entitlements and the support that is available to assist them to achieve their potential in studies. Information provided to the University is held in confidence and

are provided for official duties only with a student's written permission.

A disability shall not be linked to academic decisions regarding offers of places. Applicants are thus required to declare conditions which could be viewed as having a potential impact on their fitness to practice. Advice, guidance and support for applicants and students are provided by the Department, Health Committee and Counseling Unit.

8.0. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The University is to make reasonable adjustments when a disabled student or member of staff may be placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled.

8.1. Adjustments for Students

Examples of reasonable adjustments for students include making appropriate arrangements in such activities as:

1. Teaching, including classes, lectures, seminars, practical sessions
2. Examinations and assessments
3. Field trips and outings

8.2. Adjustments for Staff

There is an obligation to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees or potential employees to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.

Adjustments may include:

1. Reallocation of duties
2. Altering working hours
3. Changing work location
4. Modifying equipment e.g. providing an adapted keyboard or telephone
5. Consideration of other roles. Consideration should also be made for those employees associated with persons with a disability.

The University is also to make effort to support disabled employees in acquiring gadgets that support them in performing their day to day activities.

9.0. DISABLED STUDENT ALLOWANCE

The University assists disabled students to access the Disabled Students' Allowance by introducing them to Municipal/District Assemblies. The allowance is paid through the Scholarship Secretariat.

10.0. HARASSMENT AND OTHER FORMS OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

The general legal duty requires the University to have due regard to the need to eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities or to others associated with them. Harassment may take the form of verbal abuse or other actions which make an individual feel uncomfortable, intimidated or degraded.

11.0. MONITORING

The University encourages staff and students to declare any disability either at application, appointment/enrolment or during employment/study stages. This is to enable the University understand what the potential requirements and needs of staff and students with disabilities may be, in order to fulfill the anticipatory duty.

The University recognises the importance of self-declaration but also accepts that some disabled employees are reluctant to state that they are disabled. For this reason the University adopts a choice for newly recruited staff to consider two levels of disclosure:

1. Human Resource Department (HR) keeps a record and use it for monitoring purposes
2. Staff may give HR permission to let their disability status be known by their direct reports. This will assist in planning and allocation of appropriate resources.

12.0. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information given to the University by disabled staff and students will be treated with respect and confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Law. A disabled student or member of staff may volunteer information on his/her disability and ask that the information be kept confidential. The responsibility of the staff member involved is to ensure that the disabled person is aware that this is likely to have an effect on any reasonable adjustments which may be required and to document this.